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## IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION: NEW JERSEY READING FIRST

### OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL

Teaching young children to read well and on grade level by the end of third grade will ensure that they are well prepared to achieve their full academic potential. The program outlined in this proposal seeks to guide changes that will have an impact on the ability of every child in New Jersey, especially those in the state's most needy districts and schools, to acquire essential literacy skills. The Reading First initiative will guide efforts to integrate scientifically based reading research into the framework of every school. Through the use of research-based instructional and assessment practices and aligned reading materials and programs that include explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading, teachers and schools will be better prepared to meet the needs of all students. Sustained professional development and support, aligned with research-based practices and grounded in adult learning theory, will enable teachers and instructional leaders to provide appropriate and effective instruction and to determine the need for more intensive intervention. **Ultimately, the goal of this initiative is to improve each child's capacity to become a successful reader.** The Reading First Program will become a major part of New Jersey's comprehensive approach to improving early literacy. It will become an important component of the state's comprehensive standards-based system of school reform.

"Literacy is our top priority." This was the theme of the Governor's Forum on Early Literacy, held at Rutgers University on May 3, 2002. In his address before 500 participants representing local education agencies, state agencies, higher education, and communities, Governor James E. McGreevey described early literacy as a compelling, driving mission that serves as the cornerstone of his administration. In support of this mission, the Governor and the state legislature appropriated \$10 million to develop a cadre of reading coaches to assist in early literacy development in local school districts. Efforts to hire and train more than 100 coaches are underway and the Governor has promised an additional \$40 million to sustain and expand the program over the next four years. As evidence of the state's commitment to early literacy development, Commissioner of Education William Librera announced the establishment of an Office of Early Literacy staffed with literacy specialists to coordinate early literacy efforts.

Additionally, the Governor established the Early Literacy Task Force, chaired by Dorothy Strickland, professor at Rutgers University Graduate School of Education and Robert Copeland, superintendent of the Piscataway School District. The Task Force is charged with identifying effective, research-based K-3 reading practices and programs which schools can adopt and use to meet their needs. The collective expertise of the Task Force will prove invaluable as the Reading First Program moves forward. The Reading First Leadership Team and Governor's Early Literacy Task Force (see Appendix C) will work collaboratively to ensure that K-3 reading instruction and achievement is improved in all schools in the state.

As evidence of further support for literacy efforts, Governor James E. McGreevey issued an executive order requiring the NJ Department of Education to revise the existing core curriculum content standards that address K-3 literacy. The revised standards, aligned with the findings of the National Reading Panel Report (2000) and the National Research Council (1998), more clearly define what students should know and be able to do with grade-specific benchmarks. The

revised standards were presented to the State Board of Education on May 1, 2002, and will be formally adopted in July 2002.

These activities underscore New Jersey's efforts to ensure that every child in grades K-3 receives high-quality instruction that is explicit and systematic and focuses on the five components of effective early reading instruction: (1) phonemic awareness; (2) phonics; (3) fluency; (4) comprehension; and (5) vocabulary. In addition, this initiative emphasizes the importance of using early screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based reading assessments to inform classroom practices that will ultimately improve student performance. Ongoing professional development experiences, grounded in reading research and adult learning theory, will enable and empower teachers to improve the quality of classroom instruction for all students.

The New Jersey Reading First state initiative will focus on the following goals:

1. To identify, recommend, and implement scientifically based reading programs that provide explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension strategies, vocabulary development, and fluency;
2. To identify, recommend, and implement early screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments in Reading First schools; and to provide state and district level guidance and support to help teachers gauge student performance and monitor adequate yearly progress;
3. To design and implement a comprehensive professional development module for Reading First schools that is grounded in scientific-based reading research and aligned with the goals of Reading First; and to extend the use of that module to all school districts so that all New Jersey students, including limited English proficient and special education students, will receive scientific-based reading instruction;
4. To identify effective, innovative, and successful research-based reading programs that positively impact student achievement as evidenced by summative state and diagnostic assessments; and to highlight and replicate those reading programs in other schools with similar needs;
5. To identify reading experts, who will have knowledge of scientifically-based reading research and the five components of reading instruction, and who will develop and provide professional development to state and local Reading First teams;
6. To build on and promote coordination among literacy programs and efforts in the state to increase overall effectiveness in improving reading instruction; and,
7. To conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all Reading First schools that will be used to inform reading instruction and guide classroom practices in all New Jersey schools.

The Reading First Program will provide a scientific-based reading research focus that is needed to make substantial improvements in student achievement, particularly in New Jersey's lowest performing, high poverty schools known as the Abbott districts. In spite of previous, intensive school reform efforts that expanded programs, services, and funding to the state's urban districts, low student achievement is still a significant problem. Existing process and content-based

school reform efforts in these districts have not been clearly aligned with the principles of scientifically based reading research. Based on the state's eligibility criteria for Reading First funding, all Abbott districts are eligible to apply for funding to implement a Reading First Program in one or more eligible schools. In addition, there are 117 other districts eligible for the Reading First Program. It is expected that 35 eligible school districts will be funded.

The Reading First initiative will dramatically improve the quality of reading instruction in selected schools through the use of effective, research-based programs, early and ongoing assessments, and sustained professional development experiences linked to reading research. The successful features of these programs will be replicated in other schools throughout the state, so that every K-3 classroom in New Jersey provides high quality reading instruction. Through the leadership of Governor James E. McGreevey, the New Jersey Department of Education, Reading First Leadership Team, Early Literacy Task Force, Reading First Higher Education Council, and business community, New Jersey will engage in a singular focus to improve reading outcomes for all students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The State of New Jersey recognizes its responsibility to meet the challenge of educating all of its children to be successful readers. In 1997, the Supreme Court of New Jersey held in the historic Abbott vs. Burke decision that the needs of children in low performing school districts must be addressed. Funding from the Reading First grant will support efforts to ensure that all New Jersey students, particularly those enrolled in high poverty, low performing schools, will be able to read on or above grade level by the end of the third grade.

Reading First establishes a rigorous K-3 program of reading instruction and assessment in each of the project school districts. It supports a comprehensive program that requires K-3 teachers, instructional leaders, and school-based literacy teams to make a major shift in how they think about learning and how they instruct and assess reading in young children. The Reading First initiative impacts eight critical New Jersey Department of Education systemic initiatives including:

1. The revision, adoption, and implementation of the Core Curriculum Content Standards in eight content areas, with the pending adoption of new standards in language arts literacy, mathematics, and science scheduled for July 2002 and the adoption of the other five areas in November 2002;
2. The revision and implementation of a new statewide assessment system to comply with changes required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;
3. The implementation of school improvement initiatives required as part of the Supreme Court's Abbott decision, changes in school funding laws, and Title I requirements;
4. The implementation of mandated full-day kindergarten and early childhood programs in Abbott school districts;
5. The development and implementation of professional development standards, requiring continuing education for teachers and administrators, as well as requirements for two-year mentoring of novice teachers;

6. The implementation of the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP)) with a focus on changing policies to ensure school and district leaders focus on teaching and learning;
7. The development and implementation of professional standards for teachers and school administrators to guide college preparation, mentoring, and professional development; and
8. The comprehensive review of New Jersey's licensing requirements to align regulations with the Core Curriculum Content Standards and to include more focus on the teaching of reading.

These systemic efforts underscore the challenge at hand to improve teaching and learning for students in the projected 35 Reading First districts, while maintaining and improving the capacity of over 500 other school districts to support student achievement. None of these initiatives in isolation will solve the problems classroom teachers face each day but collectively, along with the strength of Reading First, they can make a significant impact on student outcomes.

To this end, New Jersey has identified a scientifically based reading research orientation to understanding children's literacy development, incorporating The National Reading Panel's (2000) report and the Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children document (Snow, Burns & Griffin , 1998) as foundations for the New Jersey Reading First program.

Research suggests that a child's early years are critical to the process of learning to read. Juel (1988) reports that most students who were reading substantially below grade level at the end of the first grade seldom caught up to other students in their grade. Furthermore, the author suggests that data from other scientifically based reading research corroborates the findings regardless of children 's ages or languages or the instructional methods used. Juel states, "... a child who does poorly in reading in the first year is likely to continue to do poorly" (1988, p.4). Providing teachers with a foundation in scientifically based reading research will transform early childhood instruction and become a critical element in raising the achievement level of New Jersey's children.

The National Reading Panel Report (2000) addresses the importance of the five components of reading instruction, including phonemic awareness, explicit and systematic phonics instruction, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development. Reading efforts must build on a child's background knowledge. New Jersey's Reading First program will incorporate each of these areas in congruence with the purposes of President Bush's education plan known as "No Child Left Behind". This foundation provides New Jersey with a strong scientific-based research framework that will help students learn to read.

The Reading First Program is based upon the following characteristics of strong performance in literacy achievement.

- **Literacy is taught through a broad range of techniques that combines phonemic awareness and phonics instruction with ongoing opportunities for applying literacy skills.** This is accomplished through a scientifically based literacy program that includes the six dimensions of reading, including a child's motivation to learn. These six areas include acquiring the skills and knowledge to understand phonemes and the ability to decode unfamiliar words. Additionally, students need the ability to read fluently and to develop sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension. Successful readers develop appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print and develop and maintain the motivation to read. These are critical areas that will help children to read well and independently by the end of third grade (National Reading Panel, 2000).
- **Assessment informs instruction.** A variety of assessments, including state-developed and teacher-designed formal and informal assessments, are necessary to help determine targeted areas of instruction (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Districts participating in Reading First will be expected to administer annual standardized assessments (e.g., Third Grade Assessment) to measure school progress toward grade level learning goals and the goals of Reading First. Schools and classroom teachers will implement frequent assessment of developing readers and use that information to plan instruction. Diagnostic assessments will provide early screening measures to assist teachers with identifying specific problem areas for K-3 readers. Children should be screened by mid-kindergarten so that those children most at risk for reading failure can be identified and appropriate interventions can be planned. Curriculum-based assessments (generally given every six to ten weeks in first grade) can help determine what students have learned and what they need to learn within the classroom program. Collecting and analyzing assessment data effectively in reading is necessary, both school-wide and disaggregated by classrooms. Working alone and in collaborative groups, Reading First teachers will analyze data to identify the root causes of low achievement in those students who have difficulty with reading. Based on these findings, teachers will implement appropriate scientifically based instructional strategies to address the needs of the identified students. Administrators and other school staff will analyze school-wide achievement data to identify trends that shed light on the causes of low achievement in reading. Appropriate school personnel, including but not limited to school and district administrators, teachers and school management teams, will work collaboratively to revise the curriculum, alter staff assignments, modify school or district policies and procedures, and address professional development needs that will support research-based reading instruction and improve student achievement.
- **Professional development supports teacher change.** A variety of high quality, intensive, and sustained professional development experiences are necessary in order to meet the individual needs of school personnel. According to the research, adult learners need opportunities to reflect and respond to new ideas, and it takes time to make sense of new learning and transfer this learning into daily teaching habits (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Comprehensive, ongoing reading training, focusing on a scientifically based reading curriculum, will occur at regional training centers supported by Reading First funds. In addition to off-site training, activities will include school-based and in-class supports such as study groups, collaborative teams, peer observations, classroom research projects, and demonstrations. A school-based literacy team will coordinate



ongoing professional development activities to enhance the talents and resources within the school that are needed to sustain changes made in active instruction. In addition, professional development schools (local level, school-based sites in three regions of the state) will be identified to act as demonstration sites so that teachers can observe “best practices” and participate in ongoing training experiences.

- **Effective partnerships involve key stakeholders.** The New Jersey Department of Education supports collaboration among Reading First stakeholders: including chief school administrators, elementary schools, local communities/school boards, state policymakers, literacy groups, education associations, and business partners. School personnel, primarily reading teachers and reading specialists/coaches, special education and English as a second language teachers, child study teams, speech-language specialists, guidance counselors and administrators, need to engage in ongoing dialogue with early literacy professionals from higher education, as well as with parents and community leaders. The involvement of higher education in the development, delivery, and evaluation of training to district and school personnel is a cornerstone of New Jersey’s program. University faculty will serve as adjunct trainers/program developers in partnership with the NJ Department of Education to focus on current reading research and cutting edge practices. Early literacy professionals from colleges/universities are represented on the newly formed Reading First Higher Education Council. In addition, New Jersey’s Reading First goals will fully support the Literacy Initiative Mission Statement (NJLIMS) supported by higher education, and professional and business organizations. The thirteen literacy items identified by NJLIMS (see Appendix I for mission statement) will be used to guide Reading First efforts and frame state policies in early literacy. In addition, the Verizon Corporation and its literacy initiative, *New Jersey Reads*, will further support literacy efforts, ranging from preschool through adults, and provide the critical resources for change around the state.
- **Early intervention programs should be designed to meet the special needs of students at-risk for school failure.** Research indicates that one-on-one tutoring, extended day learning, and transition programs are important strategies to reduce reading difficulties (Tunmer & Hoover, 1993). These components will provide individual support to students at-risk for school failure. New Jersey’s Reading First program requires LEAs to include methods of early intervention in their program design, and to describe how they plan to use early screenings and diagnostic assessments in their reading intervention plans, including interventions for special education and ESL/bilingual students.
- **Public awareness assists reading and literacy efforts.** Parents, community members, representatives from business and industry, representatives from community-based literacy organizations and public libraries, communities of faith, and local policy-makers need to be apprised of the importance and relevance of Reading First efforts. Public support of Reading First will contribute to its success and aid in establishing the groundwork for institutionalization of a statewide program in succeeding years. Governor James E. McGreevey has announced plans for a Book Club for K-3 children to be implemented in September 2002. The statewide program will be theme-based and a web site will provide interactive, developmental activities to support and enhance book choices. Literacy certificates will be awarded to all participants.

## Need for the Reading First Program in New Jersey

As a result of the landmark *Abbott vs. Burke* decision, New Jersey provides special support to 30 high-poverty, low achieving **Abbott districts**. These school districts, some of the largest in the state, must institute whole school reform initiatives designed to improve student achievement as measured by the statewide assessment program. The statewide assessment program is currently being revised to comply with the new requirements set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Since 1999, New Jersey has administered the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) to all fourth grade students each year. The ESPA assesses student achievement of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in language arts literacy and mathematics. Students are reported as being advanced proficient, proficient, or partially proficient. The scores of students who are included in the partially proficient level are considered to be below the state minimum of proficiency. Those students may be most in need of additional instructional support. Based on the May 2001 results, 44 percent of the students in the Abbott districts were scored as partially proficient in language arts literacy at grade four as compared to 15 percent of the students in all other New Jersey school districts. These results indicate a need to focus attention on early literacy in the state's high-poverty districts.

The **state's assessment program** clearly shows that many fourth graders continue to lack the basic skills necessary to become proficient readers and writers. Based on the results reported in May 2001, approximately 21 percent of New Jersey students were found to be partially proficient in language arts literacy, 69 percent were considered proficient, and nine percent were considered advanced proficient. For high poverty school districts, approximately 45 percent of the students are partially proficient, 52 percent are considered proficient, and only two percent are advanced proficient. These results highlight the need for intensive support for improved reading practices in eligible communities. Like their peers in other schools around the country, the scores for these children mirror the most recent National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP) results in reading proficiency for students living in high-poverty areas.

Consistent with the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001, new accountability measures must be put in place. These include annual testing for students in grades three to eight, expanded reading programs, and a variety of interventions for schools in need of improvement. This Act also includes interventions for failing schools as well as those who do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Schools failing to meet AYP for two consecutive years must develop a corrective action plan. To increase student achievement, professional development for school staff must be sustained, intensive, and classroom focused. New Jersey has already identified these low performing schools and recognizes the need to provide fiscal and instructional leadership and resources to ensure that all students are able to achieve academic success.

New Jersey serves students from over 166 different language backgrounds. Administrative Code, N.J.A.C. 6A:15 Bilingual Education, requires that districts with 20 or more **LEP students** in any one language group offer programs that provide academic instruction, including reading instruction, in the student's native language. In 2001-02, approximately 466 school districts served LEP students and bilingual programs were provided in 19 languages across 103 districts. Districts that receive funds to provide early childhood programs must identify LEP students and provide bilingual/ESL services. The wide range of language and cultural issues presents significant challenges for teachers dealing with students at this critical learning period. The May 2001 ESPA results show that nearly 78 percent of LEP students scored at the partially proficient level in both reading and writing.

Immigrant and low-income families are often **families in transition**. These families tend to have less access to quality preventive health care. Infant and child preventive health care is designed to diagnose and treat potential health problems that may impact a child's ability to learn, such as chronic untreated ear infections that impede speech and language development, thus impacting a child's preparedness for learning. School-based teams can help families locate appropriate community programs. This need is so significant that Governor James E. McGreevey has convened a commission to study the implementation of school-based health clinics in the state's urban schools.

The need for quality **early childhood programs** has been recognized in New Jersey. Approximately 37,849 three, four, and five-year-olds are served in early childhood programs around the state during the 2001-02 school year. As the state continues its efforts to ensure that all three-and-four-year olds are served in the Abbott districts, it recognizes that many new teachers entering the field of early childhood education need to develop an understanding of scientifically based reading research and developmentally appropriate practices. New teachers are trained in these areas through New Jersey's new P-3 teacher certification program, but there is a critical need for ongoing professional development for all early childhood teachers. As more children enroll in these programs, it becomes clear that early intervention services are necessary to ensure student success.

New Jersey is one of the most **densely populated** states in the country. Census 2000 reports that there are approximately 8.2 million people residing in New Jersey and the total population is projected to grow to approximately 8.4 million by 2006. The growth rate for whites is expected to continue to diminish, as opposed to non-whites, with a projected growth rate of 225 percent between 1990 and 2005. Census 2000 data indicate a foreign-born population of more than 17 percent with an explosive growth rate of Asian and Pacific Islanders. In 1970, fewer than ten percent of the state's residents were foreign born. Today, New Jersey is ranked seventh in the nation for concentrations of **language minority populations**. The number of New Jersey residents who speak a language other than English rose by 42 percent in the 1990s. In 2000, one of every four New Jerseyans five and older spoke a language other than English, compared to one in five in 1990. Urban communities such as Camden, Paterson, and Newark and rural communities such as Woodbine, Vineland, and Millville reflect the highest numbers and highest percentages of New Jersey residents living in **poverty**. New Jersey has many urban and rural school districts in which 50-75 percent of its students live in poverty. The populations in these areas tend to be more transient, compounding readily identified factors such as low socioeconomic status and language barriers.

New Jersey's urban and rural demographics and culturally diverse population place increased burden on school districts to demonstrate improved student achievement. Districts like Jersey City, Perth Amboy, Union City, and West New York have language minority populations higher than 75 percent. There are 166 total languages reported statewide. The number of language minority students is 249,531 with a total of 56,712 LEP students enrolled. Non-native English speakers total 227,369 with a total of 51,613 LEP students enrolled. The languages with the highest LEP enrollment statewide include Spanish, Korean, Portuguese, Gujarati, Creole (Haitian), Arabic, Mandarin, Polish, Urdu, and Russian. Spanish-speaking students represent the highest enrollment with 140,321 native speakers, including 35,764 LEP students. Over the past 12 years, enrollment for LEP students has risen by over 50 percent and has increased seven percent during the past year alone.

As a **culturally diverse** corridor state, New Jersey faces significant challenges to address the learning needs of all students. The factors described above have a profound impact on a child's ability to learn to read.

### **State Profile of New Jersey Education System**

In December 2001, William E. Librera was appointed by Governor James E. McGreevey to serve as Commissioner of Education. Currently, department activities are being decentralized. The department will consist of central operations, located in Trenton, and field operations. Three **regional education centers** will be part of field operations. These centers will provide access and support for a host of educational issues, technical assistance to schools and districts, broker professional development, and assist individuals and schools with teacher certification. The 21 county offices of education responsible for the evaluation of school districts, program review and approval, and technical assistance, are also part of field operations.

**Central operations** include divisions that address Educational Programs and Assessment, Oversight and Compliance, Student Services, Abbott Schools, Facilities and Transportation, Information and Management Services, and Finance. Responsibility for early childhood initiatives is housed in the Commissioner's Office. Within each division there are multiple offices that address more specific issues such as curriculum standards, professional standards, Title I, bilingual and ESL education, whole school reform, special education, and educational technology. Collaboration across divisions and offices is essential to the successful implementation of the Reading First initiative. An interdivisional Reading Resource Committee (see Appendix D) will work to ensure that this collaboration occurs.

In New Jersey's K-12 **public education system**, there are over 125,000 teachers serving in approximately 589 operating school districts and 57 charter schools, providing educational services to approximately 1.3 million students. As a result of continuous poor achievement and operational difficulties, three school districts (Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark) are operated by the state. In a state-operated district, a state-appointed superintendent is charged with the overall operation of the district and is required to report to the state on the district's progress in school improvement. State-operated districts must adhere to all state mandates and participate in an intensive evaluation process to ensure continuous school improvement. In addition, the Abbott districts receive additional assistance and oversight from regional program improvement centers.

The New Jersey **Core Curriculum Content Standards**, adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996, define a "thorough and efficient education" as required by the State Constitution. The standards in eight content areas are currently subject to a mandated review process. Revised standards in language arts literacy, mathematics, and science were presented to the State Board on May 1, 2002, and adopted July 2, 2002. The remaining content areas (social studies, visual and performing arts, world languages, comprehensive health and physical education, and workplace readiness) will be presented to the State Board at the September 2002 meeting, and will be adopted in November 2002.

In response to the 1996 standards, **curriculum frameworks** were developed for each of the academic areas to serve as a roadmap for teachers. Each framework contains examples of high quality activities that best represent the intent of the standards. Frameworks provide background

information on learning theory and best practices and are invaluable resources for local curriculum development. The frameworks are available on the department's website as well as in print format. Every teacher received a CD-ROM that features each framework along with sample test items and other tools to improve teaching and learning. Local school districts must design and implement curricula that are aligned to the core standards. New Jersey does not have statewide textbook adoption; therefore, the selection of textbooks, materials, and instructional strategies used to achieve the CCCS are left to the discretion of local education agencies.

New Jersey's **Statewide Assessment program** at grades 4, 8, and 11/12 linked the standards to state-constructed criterion-referenced tests that aimed to raise the bar for all students, including special education and bilingual/ESL students. The statewide assessment system is being revised to comply with the new federal requirements outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as well as the Governor's literacy initiative. In the months to follow, the department will implement a new testing program that emphasizes language arts literacy, mathematics, and science. Assessment options in the other content areas are under review. Changes to the regulations that govern the statewide assessment program are already in progress and should be adopted by the State Board in the fall of 2002.

In its May 1997 decision, the Supreme Court accepted the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards, covering seven academic areas, as the definition of what students need to learn as the result of the State Constitution's guarantee of a "thorough and efficient education". A year later the justices strongly endorsed whole school reform as an approach that can enable students in the 30 **Abbott school districts** to reach those goals.

In arriving at its decision, the Court directed the Department of Education to study all of the various approaches to improving the academic achievement of students from low-income families. Based on this extensive review of programs and research, the department proposed "whole school reform" as being the most effective approach. Specific key elements must be addressed in any whole school reform model adopted by an Abbott district. Whole school reform models must:

- Be a research-based program;
- Improve student performance;
- Support school based leadership and decision making;
- Integrate and align school functions;
- Incorporate the use of educational technology;
- Provide and support professional development for all staff;
- Foster a safe school environment;
- Provide for a coordinated system of student and family health and social services; and
- Offer rewards.

All of New Jersey's reform efforts and the current reorganization of the New Jersey Department of Education will contribute to the successful implementation of the Reading First Program.

## SECTION 1: IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION

### 1. A. CURRENT READING INITIATIVES AND IDENTIFIED GAPS

#### **Current Reading Initiatives**

*What initiatives are currently in place in the State to improve K-3 reading achievement?*

New Jersey supports a wide array of efforts designed to increase student reading performance and overall academic achievement, especially in the lowest performing schools that will compose the Reading First population. Statewide efforts have centered on establishing clear and specific student expectations, providing a means to assess the achievement of those standards, and providing schools and teachers with the tools to enhance reading instruction through quality professional development experiences. In the state's poorest and lowest achieving districts, state initiatives have focused on improving teaching and learning. To enhance those efforts and extend similar assistance to other underachieving schools, Governor James E. McGreevey established a recruitment and training program for **reading coaches**. The state has allocated \$10 million per year for the next four years (\$40 million) to support the work of over 100 qualified coaches to assist reading development in eligible schools in the state. This program will serve to enhance the more concentrated efforts implemented by Reading First schools.

The Governor's Office has established a monthly **book club** for K-3 students, starting in September 2002, that will run for nine months and include different book titles for each grade. Governor McGreevey will announce his book selections monthly as a means of motivating young children to increase their recreational reading time. Children who read nine or more books will receive a certificate. The NJ Department of Education will assist with the distribution of materials that will be provided by publishers and in devising a means whereby children can go online and record the numbers of books they have read.

Pursuant to the mandated five-year review of the New Jersey **Core Curriculum Content Standards** as well as Governor James E. McGreevey's Executive Order issued in February 2002, a panel of teachers, administrators, and representatives was convened to review and revise the 1996 language arts literacy standards. The process was initiated in May 2001 and has been expedited to comply with the Governor's order. As part of the review process, the department engaged the services of outside consultants to review the standards and assessments and make recommendations for improvements. This information, along with the collective expertise of the panelists, was used to inform the revision process. Beginning in January 2002, the revised standards were subject to an extended public comment period.

The revised **language arts literacy standards** (see Appendix B), adopted July 2, 2002, were aligned with national standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. In addition, Achieve, Inc. reviewed New Jersey's 1996 standards and recommended that they provide more clarity and specificity by including benchmarking at more grade levels. Achieve, Inc. recommended that attention be given to the primary grades and that phonics instruction be integrated into the context of meaningful reading and writing tasks. The revised standards, specifically the reading standard (3.1) and its categorical strands (see pages in the Revised Standards document, Appendix B), have been strongly influenced by the research of the National Reading Panel (2000) and the six dimensions of reading that include: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and

motivation. Based on public review and feedback, as well as the new requirements set forth in the “*No Child Left Behind Act*”, the standards were further refined to establish grade-specific benchmarks at K-4.

In order to provide teachers with tools to implement the revised language arts literacy standards, the department will develop an addendum to the existing language arts framework. This addendum will provide detailed plans for implementing scientific-based reading strategies (aligned with the National Reading Panel, 2000 and Reading First legislation) in a comprehensive K-3 reading program and across all content areas (K-12). The updated information will assist teachers, regardless of content specialty, to foster sound, research-based practices in their classrooms. This addendum will be posted on the Department’s website and featured on the New Jersey Professional Development Port (NJPEP), the department’s Virtual internet Academy.

In 1999, the department initiated a family literacy program called **Gaining Achievement in the New Standards (GAINS)**. Supported by \$800,000 over three years, the GAINS program was designed to educate teachers, parents, and community members about the language arts literacy standards. The GAINS project established strong partnerships with higher education, which included project investigators Dr. Lesley Morrow and Dr. Michael Smith, both from Rutgers University, and Dr. Dianne Tracey from Kean University. A GAINS Advisory Board, established to guide the project, is represented on the Reading First Leadership Team.

In 2001-02, the GAINS project expanded its training component to provide K-12 teachers with opportunities to experience hands-on strategies to effectively implement the language arts literacy standards. The GAINS website provides additional materials and resources for both parents and teachers. Future plans for the project include the development of a video and print materials that will include information for preschool and K-3 teachers on scientific-based reading research and the five components of effective early reading instruction.

There are a number of other state programs that support literacy development. For example, the **America Reads Challenge** program has been effectively implemented at over 15 university sites statewide. The Rutgers America Reads tutoring model is a research-based tutorial model implemented by Dr. Lesley Morrow and colleagues. Two **National Writing Project** sites are housed in New Jersey, one at Rider University and the other at Rutgers University. These project sites will be utilized for the Reading First program to enhance professional development opportunities for teachers and local education agencies.

The **New Jersey Network (NJN) Public Broadcasting, Inc.** launched the *Ready to Learn* series aimed at preschool and school age children to age twelve. This program combines PBS educational programming with NJN training for parents, teachers, and caregivers reaching approximately 1,700 children. In support of this literacy service, NJN distributed, free-of-charge, more than 5,600 first books. The *Reading Rainbow Program*, also sponsored by NJN, encourages young elementary students to write poetry and design pictures for a statewide competition. NJN has also made a commitment to adult literacy programming. In 1999, NJN began airing *Workplace Essential Skills*, an extension of NJN’s literacy education and workforce development initiatives. The series, designed primarily by PBS Literacy Link, helps unemployed and underemployed pre-GED adults (sixth to eighth grade reading level) to develop essential skills for finding and keeping a job. NJN is represented on the Reading First Leadership Team.

One of New Jersey's major telecommunications companies, **NJ Verizon**, has funded \$125,000 over two years for a state planning grant and established a **NJ Reads** charter. The grant supports the implementation of a statewide literacy initiative to raise public awareness for literacy and support local grassroots efforts in schools and communities for children, adolescents, and adults. The Department of Education is represented on the Verizon Advisory Board and Verizon participates as a member of the Reading First Leadership Team. The NJ Reads initiative can further support the Governor's reading initiative and Reading First through funding professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators. NJ Reads plans to partner with the NJDOE on developing a mentorship/tutoring model involving corporations working with young children in the schools.

Other reading initiatives have been conducted through Title I, bilingual and ESL, and special education program units. All are specifically linked to the state's language arts literacy standards. In addition, the state's reading associations and curriculum groups have joined the New Jersey Department of Education staff in providing professional development opportunities that are linked to both the state standards, as well as the recommendations from the National Reading Panel.

### **Identified Gaps**

*What gaps exist in these initiatives, particularly in their relationship to scientifically based reading research?*

Despite intensive efforts to provide effective instruction for all children, particularly those in the state's most economically disadvantaged communities, learning and performance gaps remain. Examples of some of these gaps are outlined below.

- Although New Jersey high school students score at or near the top on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT, Educational Testing Service, Princeton), the state's fourth graders, as a whole, have not acquired a level of literacy that is acceptable by state standards in language arts literacy on the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA).
- National and state census data indicate that minority and bilingual communities continue to grow dramatically, challenging New Jersey schools. As supported in Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998), children from poor families, children of African American and Hispanic descent, and children attending urban schools are at much greater risk of poor reading outcomes than are middle-class, European-American, and suburban children.
- The results of statewide assessments (e.g., ESPA) have been slow to reach local school districts and have been of little help to teachers trying to diagnose and individualize instruction. Oftentimes, the test results reach the school after the child has moved to the next grade level.
- Each school in an Abbott district must select its own whole school reform model. Schools select from a menu of content or process models that are implemented with oversight from a school management team. Since each school selects its own model, students who transfer within the district may be at a distinct disadvantage, especially in the early years. If they transfer to another New Jersey school district not required to



institute whole school reform, the child might be subject to a completely different reading philosophy or curricular model. Unlike some of the content reform models, the process models may not provide enough curricular guidance to support a scientific-based reading research orientation.

- Professional development opportunities may vary depending on the LEAs geographic location and proximity to university-based education programs. Those schools located on the northern part of the state have access to numerous college programs. In the southern part of the state, university programs are limited, requiring some schools to seek professional development in Pennsylvania or Delaware. Programs may be of short duration, taught in isolation of classroom context, and have little impact on classroom practice. Professional development may still be perceived as “getting hours” rather than something that truly benefits instructional competency.
- The thirty Abbott school districts receive intensive support and assistance from the New Jersey Department of Education. Program support and oversight has been split among a number of different offices and divisions. This approach does not support a cohesive and coordinated approach to school improvement.
- Trends in teacher licensure indicate that interest in obtaining reading certification is low. Anticipating a teacher shortage, the number of trained and competent elementary teachers, early childhood teachers, and reading specialists may not keep pace with the demand.
- Teacher preparation programs need to prepare all teachers, regardless of specialty area or grade level certification, to incorporate the principles of scientific-based reading research into classroom instructional practices. Additionally, professional teaching standards must require that all teachers have an understanding of effective reading practices, and that 12 credits in the core area of reading be required for all elementary certifications.
- Legislative efforts are often in response to perceived issues or concerns rather than on scientific-based research or best practice. Currently, there are four “literacy-related” bills that have been introduced during the 2002 state legislative session. One bill focuses only on media literacy while another seeks to increase voluntary contributions to the Focus on Literacy Program. A third bill, which has garnered significant support, seeks to introduce the Learning Through Listening program to urban districts. This program focuses on acquiring audio texts for students with visual, learning, or physical difficulties. Finally, a bill has been introduced that would establish a procedure for the diagnosis of reading difficulties in children grades K-2. The bill requires the state to develop a list of accepted diagnostic assessments and to provide training to teachers and administrators and at the same time, it requires LEAs to report the results of the assessments and develop and submit an intervention plan. Unfortunately, there is not a separate state appropriation for this bill and it requires the program to be derived from existing state aid to public schools.

It is clear that there have been many well-intended efforts to improve the academic achievement of New Jersey's students. Despite a number of gaps, improvements can be made to close them. Several improvements are already under way, including:

- The development and implementation of a student assessment and single state accountability system, based on the revised language arts literacy standards, that provides teachers with timely and meaningful data about student achievement and school and district performance;
- The coordination of professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators that are consistently of high quality no matter where the LEA is located in the state;
- The alignment of oversight for the thirty Abbott districts into one department division, thus fostering coordination and competency;
- The development of professional standards for all teachers and administrators that will support research-and standards-based instruction; and
- A review of current licensure regulations and the creation of P-3 certification for teachers in early childhood programs that includes more intensive preparation in language arts literacy development.

The Reading First program will solidify the current infrastructure for literacy efforts, particularly in the 30 Abbott districts, to make significant changes in the delivery of instruction.

## **1. B. STATE OUTLINE AND RATIONALE FOR USING SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING RESEARCH**

*How will the SEA connect the scientifically based reading research to plans for improving K-3 reading instruction?*

The ability to read is vital to functioning effectively in a modern society. The goal of New Jersey's Reading First Program is to ensure that all children become successful readers by the end of third grade. To achieve this goal, the state has aligned its approach with scientifically-based reading research and identified effective ways of fostering children's literacy growth. New Jersey has conducted an extensive review of the research, specifically from the National Reading Panel Report (2000) and the National Research Council (1998), and established core principles around which the Reading First Program is built.

Compelling research reveals a clear understanding of the abilities that lead to success with reading and how children learn to read. In 1997, Congress requested the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel of experts to assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. In response, the Secretary of Education charged the National Reading Panel (NRP) to carry out this charge. In November 1998 the *Report of the National Reading Panel* took into account the foundational work of the National Research Council (NRC) Committee on "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The NRC Committee identified and summarized research literature relevant to the critical skills, environments, and early developmental interactions that are instrumental in the acquisition of beginning reading skills.

The findings of the NRP (1998) reflect a focused effort to contribute reliable, valid, and trustworthy information to the body of knowledge that is leading to a better understanding of reading development and reading instruction. For the purposes of this proposal, all scientifically based reading research and the five dimensions of early reading derive from this reliable body of research. This research has tremendous implications for teachers, administrators, and policy makers, and certainly for the Reading First Program. Research from the National Reading Panel's Report (2000) provides excellent insight into beginning reading instruction. Additionally, the resource, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, offers important information and data that support New Jersey's efforts in the Reading First Program.

The goals for New Jersey's Reading First program are consistent with the National Reading Panel (2000), as well as with the purposes of the "*No Child Left Behind Act*" (2001). These guiding principles embody the following outcome objectives. The Reading First Program will:

### **Outcome 1: Reading Achievement**

Teach every child to read by the end of third grade as evidenced by gains in student achievement.

### **Outcome 2: Reading Instruction**

Improve reading instruction through the use of findings from scientifically based reading research.

### **Outcome 3: Professional Development**

Develop a research-based professional development system that will result in the delivery of instructional practices that maximize reading gains.

## **Outcome 1: Reading Achievement**

The explicit goal of the "*No Child Left Behind Act*" (2001) is to dramatically improve the academic achievement of all students. Reading is the foundation for the study of all other academic disciplines. Children who are not reading at or above grade level by third grade are less likely to catch up and thus experience academic success. Putting scientific-based reading research into practice increases the likelihood that the child will develop the knowledge and skills needed to become a successful reader by the end of grade 3.

Scientifically based reading research establishes the framework for reading instruction that guides reading development and provides support for those who are experiencing reading difficulties. The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA, 1999) identified the following six characteristics of reading programs that successfully increase students' reading achievement. Schools that are successful:

- Involve the entire school staff to improve student achievement;
- Establish clearly stated goals for reading achievement;
- Establish and share high expectations for all students;
- Articulate the instructional means to accomplish the goals;
- Monitor student progress using shared assessments; and
- Implement comprehensive and coordinated programs that include a range of materials and technology, a focus on both reading and writing, and parent and community involvement.

New Jersey's Reading First applicants will be required to address these six characteristics of successful schools, and provide details as to how they plan to incorporate these characteristics into their overall school plans.

## **Outcome 2: Reading Instruction**

Formal reading instruction should start in kindergarten and should include literature-based instruction supported by an explicit, systematic phonics program. In kindergarten and first grade, concept and vocabulary development and comprehension should be promoted through rich literature using big books and read alouds (Anderson & Peabody, 1983; Kame'enui et al., 1982; Marks et al., 1974). In grades two and three, students should build their capacity to comprehend more difficult and varied text (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 210). By the end of third grade, students should possess the skills, reading habits, and learning strategies needed for fourth grade success. Students at this level need to be prepared to learn about, discuss, and write about the ideas and information encountered in their texts (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p.211).

The use of scientifically based reading research enables New Jersey to incorporate instructional techniques into its programs that will help young children to experience reading success. Scientific-based reading research yields information that teachers can use to teach more effectively. The dimensions of effective reading instruction are two-fold: firstly, reading instruction must address the right content; and secondly, good reading instruction must be organized and delivered in a way that is consistent with the research. The findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) provide data and documented information to improve reading

instruction. The National Reading Panel studied five areas of instruction, which form the basis for Reading First. The findings are described below.

### **(1) Phonemic Awareness**

One of the most important foundations of reading success is phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds—phonemes—in spoken words. It is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words. Phonemes are the smallest unit of spoken language. There are approximately 41 phonemes in the English language (e.g., stop has four phonemes : /s/ /t/ /o/ /p/). Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes phonemic awareness. In addition to phonemes, phonological awareness activities can involve work with rhymes, words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. Onsets and rimes are smaller than syllables but larger than phonemes. For example, an onset is the initial consonant (b) sound of a syllable (the onset of *boy* is b-; of *swim* is sw-). A rime is the part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it (the rime of *boy* is –oy; of *swim*, -im).

Effective phonemic awareness instruction teaches children to notice, think about and work with sounds in spoken language. Activities that build phonemic awareness include phoneme isolation, identity, categorization, blending, segmentation, deletion, addition, and substitution. Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when it focuses on only one or two types of phoneme manipulation, rather than on several types (Reading First Guidance, p. 41).

Explicit instruction in sound identification, matching, segmentation, and blending, when linked appropriately to sound symbol association, reduces the risk of reading failure and accelerates early reading and spelling acquisition for all children (Every Child Reading, 2000). Drs. Ehri and Wilce (1987) studied the effectiveness of explicit teaching of phonemic awareness as a key component of beginning reading. Foorman and others (1998) explored the use of systematic phonics instruction and found that it produces gains in reading in the early grades.

A large body of research documents that phonemic awareness is related to early development of the ability to read and spell words (Blachman, 1984; Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Fox & Routh, 1980; Lundberg, Frost, & Petersen, 1988; Perfetti, Beck, Bell & Hughes, 1987; Treiman & Baron, 1981; and Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987). Correlational studies have identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the two best school entry predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first 2 years of instruction (Share, Jorm, Maclean, & Matthews, 1984).

Phonemic awareness is a vital precursor to reading instruction for the young child (Chaney, 1992; Liberman et al., 1974; Ehri & Wilce, 1980, 1985; Perfetti et al., 1987; Juel, 1991; Scarborough, 1989; Stanovich, 1986; Wagner et al., 1994). This is a skill that must be explicitly taught since it is not acquired naturally (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg, & Beeler, 1998). Explicit instruction in sound identification, matching, segmentation, and blending, when linked appropriately to sound-symbol association, reduces the risk of reading failure and accelerates early reading and spelling acquisition for all children (Every Child Reading, 2000). It is a crucial step toward the understanding of the alphabetic principle that phonemes are what letters stand for, and ultimately towards learning to read (Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998).

The National Reading Panel findings show that phonemic awareness training programs implemented by teachers effectively increase student reading and spelling performance (2000).

They also identified characteristics of programs that were used successfully by classroom teachers (Blachman, Ball, Black & Tangel, 1994; Brady, Fowler, Stone, & Winbury, 1994). According to "Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read (CIERA & NIFL, 2001), an effective phonemic awareness program should take no more than 20 hours in one school year.

## **(2) Phonics Instruction**

Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn and use the alphabetic principle. Children who have attained an understanding of this know that there is a predictable relationship between the phonemes and the graphemes and thus are able to "sound out" words they have not encountered before. Knowledge of the alphabetic principle enables children to read words in isolation and in connected text.

Significant scientifically based reading research exists which focuses on the benefits of systematic phonics instruction. The National Reading Panel Report (2000, p.8) states that "The hallmark of a systematic phonics approach or program is that a sequential set of phonics elements is delineated and these elements are taught along a dimension of explicitness, depending on the type of phonics methods employed."

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction provides practice with letter-sound relationships in a predetermined sequence. Children learn to use these relationships to decode words that contain them. There is a substantial body of research that tells us that children who are most at risk for reading failure must have explicit, systematic phonics instruction (Adams, 1990; Adams & Bruck, 1995; Ehri, 1992; Ehri & Robbins, 1992). The focus of systematic phonics instruction is on helping children acquire knowledge of the alphabetic principle and its use to decode new words, and to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically. Systematic phonics instruction should extend from kindergarten to second grade, especially for those students at risk for future reading problems (Blachman et al., 1999; Brown & Felton, 1999; Torgesen et al., 1999).

The National Reading Panel (2000, p.9) determined that "The meta-analysis indicated that systematic phonics instruction enhances children's success in learning to read and that systematic phonics instruction is significantly more effective than instruction that teaches little or no phonics." This information confirms the work of Chall (1967) who found substantial and consistent advantages for programs that included systematic phonics, as measured by outcomes on word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension at least through the third grade (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). These findings indicate that the advantage of having phonics instruction is even greater for students coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or low-level abilities entering first grade. Phonics should never be the total reading program nor be the dominant component in a reading program; rather, it should be integrated with other forms of reading instruction to create a comprehensive reading program (National Reading Panel, 2000).

### **(3) Fluency**

Reading fluency is defined as reading text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression (National Reading Panel, 2000). Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension and fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time (Reading First Guidance, p. 3). Gaining fluency in reading involves developing rapid and automatic word identification processes (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). In reading, automaticity entails “practice” at word identification, such as frequent retrievals of word forms and meanings from print. The National Reading Panel considered the effectiveness of two major institutional approaches to fluency development and the readiness of these approaches for wide use by the schools. The Panel reviewed the research on guided repeated oral reading (Faulkner & Levy, 1999; Levy, Nicholls, & Kohen, 1993; Rasinski, 1990) and the research on formal efforts to increase the amount of independent reading that children engage in, such as sustained silent reading programs (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1991; Collins, 1980; Langford & Allen, 1983; Holt & O’Tuel, 1989)

The National Reading Panel (2000) concluded that repeated reading and other procedures that have students reading passages orally multiple times while receiving guidance or feedback from peers, parents, or teachers are effective in improving a variety of reading skills. The panel stated that “these procedures help improve students’ reading ability, at least through grade 5, and they help improve the reading of students with learning problems much later than this.” (pp.3-20).

Relating to efforts designed to increase the amount of independent or recreational reading, the National Reading Panel (2000) did not find that research demonstrated the relationship between voluntary reading and an increase in reading achievement. The Panel acknowledged the widely held belief that teachers should encourage students to engage in independent reading in order to help student achievement, but did not find data to support this. In essence, there have been insufficient studies to prove or disprove the impact of independent reading.

### **(4) Comprehension**

Comprehension is defined as “intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader” (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Thus, “readers derive meaning from text when they engage in intentional, problem solving thinking processes. The data suggests that text comprehension is enhanced when readers actively relate the ideas represented in print to their own knowledge and experiences, and construct mental representations in memory” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 14). In effect, children need to build on prior knowledge and experience to be able to read (Athey, 1983). Research has indicated that comprehension can be strengthened through instruction that aids students to become more aware of their thinking during the reading process (Pressley, 1998). These “meta-cognitive” strategies help students monitor whether or not they adequately comprehend text, and lead them to employ specific strategies when comprehension is determined to be suffering.

Reading for comprehension entails using strategies for understanding, remembering, and communicating with others about what has been read. These strategies are specific steps that purposeful, active readers use to make sense of what they read. The National Reading Panel (2000) recognizes that there are three areas of information relating to reading comprehension: (1) vocabulary instruction; (2) text comprehension instruction; and, (3) teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction. Research in comprehension clearly demonstrates the importance of connecting to a reader’s background knowledge for understanding text (Anderson

and Pearson, 1984; Dole, Valencia, Greer, & Wardrop, 1991; Neuman, 1988) and creating a knowledge of vocabulary. The Reading Panel (2000) found that vocabulary should be taught directly and indirectly through repetition and multiple exposures and should entail active engagement in rich learning tasks.

At school age, children are expected to learn the meanings of new words at the rate of several thousand per year. Many of these words are learned by reading them in books or by hearing them read aloud from books. Critical in developing this foundation is active processing of word meanings, which develops understandings of words and their uses, and connections among word concepts (Learning First Alliance, 2000).

Even before children can read for themselves, teachers can build vital background knowledge by reading interactively and frequently to children from a variety of narrative and expository text (Every Child Reading, 2000). As Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children points out, "Every opportunity should be taken to extend and enrich the children's background knowledge and understanding in every way possible, for the ultimate significance and memorability of any word or text depends on whether children possess the background knowledge and conceptual sophistication to understand its meaning." (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998, p.80 - 83).

In terms of text comprehension instruction, The National Reading Panel (2000) found that the most effective strategies for teaching comprehension are comprehension monitoring, cooperative learning, graphic and semantic organizers including story maps, question answering, question generation, and summarization.

According to Markman (1978), comprehension monitoring involves the readers becoming aware of when they understand what they read. Comprehension monitoring involves teaching readers to become aware of when they do not understand, to identify where they do not understand, and to use appropriate fix-up strategies to improve comprehension when it is blocked (Taylor et al., 1992). Comprehension monitoring is the ability to accurately assess one's own understanding (Baker and Anderson, 1982; Garner, 1980, Otero and Kintsch, 1992; Vosniadou et al., 1988). Training in metacognitive skills has been shown to be effective for improving comprehension (Brown et al., 1984; Paris et al., 1984, Gambrell and Bales, 1986; Palincsar and Brown, 1984). Cooperative learning leads to an increase in the learning of strategies, promotes intellectual discussion and increases reading comprehension (Bramlett, 1994; Uttero, 1988). Graphic and semantic organizers teach students to organize ideas they are reading about in a systematic, visual graph which helps them to comprehend material (Alvermann & Boothby, 1986; Gordon & Rennie, 1987). The strongest scientific evidence was found for the question generation strategy (National Reading Panel, 2000). Research findings suggest that question generation by students was an extremely effective means of helping them to comprehend text.

## **(5) Vocabulary Development**

The development of oral and reading vocabulary, background knowledge, and speaking and listening skills are critical to comprehension and expression. Vocabulary development entails the development of stored information about the meanings and pronunciation of words needed for communication. There are four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The reciprocal nature of the relationship between oral language and written language suggests that oral language communicative competence supports the development of early



literacy; in turn, the development of early literacy skills support the further development of oral language (Snow, 1991).

Knowledge of words and word meanings is critical to reading comprehension (Learning First Alliance, 2000). According to Beck, Perfetti, and McKeown (1982), word meanings are not learned from a single encounter but are learned from repeated encounters and incorporated into working vocabulary as they are used. Therefore, professional development for teachers should focus on strategies to assist teachers with techniques for vocabulary instruction and the theoretical knowledge to interpret students' word learning efforts. Teachers must understand that teaching vocabulary the same way each time will not result in optimal learning for students (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Words that are essential for understanding of passage meaning should be directly introduced before students read a selection. A meta-analysis of research by Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) found that direct instruction in vocabulary improves comprehension especially pre-instruction of vocabulary words prior to reading. The most useful words to teach should include high frequency words in a mature language user's vocabulary and are found in varying contexts and content areas (Beck, McKeown, Omanson, 1984).

Direct instruction is useful in developing vocabulary, especially if it is "rich instruction" that requires students to manipulate words in a variety of ways (such as relating new words to their own experiences) and that includes much discussion of words (Beck, McKeown & Omanson, 1984). Rich vocabulary instruction should provide students with many encounters with new words and should require them to use words outside of vocabulary lessons, unlike the traditional "skill-drill" workbook approach. Rich instruction of vocabulary words should focus on those words that are unfamiliar to children, necessary to understanding texts, and useful in a variety of contexts.

Encouraging independent learning of new vocabulary is also recommended and desirable. One way to accomplish this is through independent reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Teachers should put a strong focus on learning new words, displaying vocabulary words and word-building activities around the classroom, and talking about words. Children should also be encouraged to draw relations between words (Beck et al., 1987).

### **Writing to Read/Reading to Write**

Instruction in the use of writing to develop comprehension skills of predicting, summarizing, questioning, inferring, and clarifying the materials read can enhance comprehension (National Research Council, 1998; Palincsar et al., 1993; Hiebert et al., 1992). Fluent, accurate letter formation and spelling are associated with students' production of longer and better organized compositions (Berninger, Vaughan, Abbott & Abbott, Brooks, Rogan, Reed, & Graham, 1997). Students learn spelling and handwriting more readily if those skills are taught explicitly from first grade onward and if they are applied in the context of frequent, purposeful writing assignments (Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide, 2000, p. 22).

Writing should take place daily and needs to become part of the comprehensive reading program of instruction. Instruction should be designed with the understanding that the use of invented spelling is not in conflict with teaching correct spelling. Beginning writing with invented spelling can help children to develop understanding of phoneme identity, phoneme segmentation, and

sound-spelling relationships. Conventionally correct spelling should be developed through focused instruction and practice. Children should be expected to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in their final writing products (Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, 1998, pp. 323- 324).

In order for all children to be able to read on or above grade level by grade 3, teachers must address all five areas of effective reading instruction. The components must be integrated into a cohesive and coherent instructional plan that includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, and ample opportunities for practice and reinforcement. The instructional plan should also ensure that sufficient time is allocated for reading instruction, ensuring that students have an uninterrupted block of time for reading of at least 90 minutes per day.

### **Outcome 3: Professional Development**

In order to implement programs supported by these findings, appropriate opportunities for professional development must be available to K-3 teachers and school literacy teams. A quality professional development program must include the essential knowledge, skills, and experiences, needed to understand both theory and effective classroom practices. According to Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide (Learning First Alliance, 2000, p. 8), several steps must be addressed in order for a teacher to learn a new behavior and effectively transfer that learning to the classroom. Teachers must:

- Understand the theory and rationale for the new content and instruction;
- Observe a model in action;
- Practice the new behavior in a safe context; and
- Try out the behavior with peer support in the classroom.

New Jersey's plan for professional development supports findings from the Learning First Alliance and is congruent with the National Staff Development Council Standards. Funded schools will need to create a professional development plan that shows evidence of:

- Strong leadership that supports and motivates all school staff;
- Alignment with the school's comprehensive plan for school improvement;
- A norm of continuous improvement;
- Adequate time during the workday for staff members to learn and work together to accomplish the school's mission and goals; and
- An understanding that professional development is a change process that requires time and commitment.

The New Jersey Department of Education and the Reading First Leadership Team support the findings documented in the scientifically based research presented in this document. In order to implement these findings, appropriate opportunities for professional development must be available to K-3 teachers and school literacy teams. A variety of professional development activities will be encouraged, including study groups, individual projects, and feedback from those that are expert. There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. According to Fullan (1991), change occurs in definable stages, and ideas need to be incubated before people act on them. In the area of reading instruction, foundation knowledge concerning reading development, the

structure of English, and the research on instruction are essential (Learning First Alliance, 2000, p. 9).

New Jersey's Reading First Professional Development plan is modeled after "A Blueprint for Professional Development for Reading, Knowledge, Skills, and Learning Activities" (Moats, 2001; adapted from Learning First Alliance's *Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide*, 2001). This blueprint is intended to help both novice and experienced teachers implement comprehensive reading instruction (see Appendix G). This plan delineates the knowledge teachers need in order to understand the process and content of instruction, the skills teachers need in order to implement the instruction, and the types of professional development activities teachers need in order to examine and practice using the knowledge and skills in each component of reading instruction. This outline is derived from the Report of the National Reading Panel (National Institutes of Health, 2000).

The report recommends that workshops should be followed by extensive in-class coaching by trained reading coaches or mentors. Additionally, teachers should have access to outside expertise in the components of effective reading instruction. Professional development must provide for peer collaboration, observation, and a variety of experiences to enhance teacher learning (National Institutes of Health, 2000). The Reading First state professional development plan also draws from the research in Putting Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read (National Institute for Literacy, 2001), Teaching Reading is Rocket Science (American Federation of Teachers, 1999), and Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide (Learning First Alliance, 2000). These materials will be replicated for all participating teachers and administrators and incorporated fully into all professional development training by the state. New Jersey's plan includes all these critical activities and is further described in Section 1.F.

### ***How will SBRR be applied to the use of instructional programs?***

#### **Adherence to Scientific Research in Instructional Programs.**

A "balanced" approach in the elementary classroom does not mean that each component of reading instruction receives equal emphasis at every stage of reading development (Learning First Alliance, 1998, p. 11). Students need a "steady diet" of varied reading experiences shared with others (Learning First Alliance, p. 11). The key components of effective, research-supported reading instruction for the primary grades must include:

- Phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print;
  - Alphabetic code: Phonics and decoding;
  - Fluent, automatic reading of text;
  - Vocabulary;
  - Text Comprehension;
  - Written expression;
  - Spelling and handwriting;
  - Screening and continuous assessment to inform instruction; and
  - Motivating children to read and developing their literacy horizons.
- (Every Child Reading: An Action Plan, Learning First Alliance, 1998)

New Jersey's Reading First program will require rigorous professional development (for teachers and administrators) in implementing the following comprehensive components:

- School reading programs that are aligned with the revised language arts literacy standards and particularly the scientific-based reading research components, as outlined in the K-3 reading accomplishments list developed by the National Research Council et al. (see Appendix H);
- School reading programs, materials, and practices that are grounded in scientifically based reading research and the goals of Reading First.
- Beginning readers (K-2) will receive explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, along with early and continued exposure to rich literature and writing opportunities.
- Emergent readers will be encouraged to sound out and confirm the identities of visually unfamiliar words they encounter, recognizing words through attention to their letter-sound relationships as well as through context clues. Various approaches will be utilized including the use of multi-media software.
- Fluency will be promoted through increased opportunities for guided oral reading practice and repeated readings.
- Specific instruction on the development of vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension strategies, specific instruction in these skills will be implemented, since the ability to obtain meaning from print depends strongly on them.
- Instruction will promote comprehension by actively building linguistic and conceptual knowledge in a rich variety of domains, as well as through direct instruction about comprehension strategies, such as summarizing the main idea, question generation, use of graphic organizers, predicting events and outcomes, drawing inferences, and monitoring for understanding.
- School reading programs will be in alignment with the recommendations of the Early Literacy Task Force (e.g., recommendation of best practices and grouping based on scientific reading research) and other criteria established by the Reading First leadership Team (e.g. core reading program and materials selection criteria, qualified assessment tools).
- Extensive on-going professional development for teachers and administrators, held at the Department's regional centers, will focus on how to incorporate research-based strategies into classroom instruction.
- Programs will foster partnerships among state agencies and organizations, parent and community groups, professional associations, business and industry, and higher education to lay the foundation for systemic change and improvement.
- New Jersey will adopt professional standards for teachers that ensure a focus on reading in teacher preparation programs, mentoring, and professional development.
- New Jersey teacher licensing requirements will be revised to increase preservice requirements, requiring specific coursework in reading for teachers and others working with children in preschool and K-3.
- High-quality professional development will be required for all K-3 classroom teachers. School level plans should provide training in SBRR to all teachers, including "special subject teachers" such as health and physical education teachers and visual and performing arts teachers. Professional development for all school staff, including educational support staff such as school nurses, school social workers, and school

psychologists, will enable them to help the classroom teacher identify health and social issues that may impede reading progress.

***How will SBBR be applied to the use of instructional strategies, materials, and assessments?***

In order to effectively teach all children to read, the above components must be integrated into a coherent instructional design. New Jersey will ensure that Reading First programs develop a design that includes explicit instructional strategies that address students' specific strengths and weaknesses, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities and aligned student materials, and the use of targeted, scientifically based instructional strategies as appropriate. Students should be provided with a protected, uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction of more than 90 minutes per day. A high-quality reading program also includes assessment strategies for diagnosing student needs and measuring progress, as well as a professional development plan that ensures teachers have the skills and support necessary to implement the program effectively and to meet the reading needs of individual students.

Subgrantees are expected to articulate a cohesive and coordinated approach to instruction in their application. It will take time for teachers and administrators to fully understand the definition of "scientifically-based reading research." This understanding will evolve under the leadership of experts (e.g., educational consultants, trained reading coaches, school literacy teams) who know and fully understand the classroom application of scientific-based research.

The New Jersey Department of Education's definition of scientifically based reading research, taken from the Reading First Guidance (p. 47), is as follows:

**Scientifically Based Reading Research** is research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
4. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

LEAs are required to use the following guidelines in identification and selection of all programs, materials, and assessments:

1. Research that has been conducted by an independent, third party;
2. Longitudinal study (at least three years) that spans several sequential grade levels (particularly at the K-3 level);
3. Research that uses a clinical model with experimental and control groups to show statistically significant reading gains over time; and
4. Replicable research that has been used with student populations similar to the subgrantee.

Scientific-based research will be applied to all required Reading First activities related to selection and use of instructional strategies, professional development, instructional materials and programs, and diagnostic, screening, and classroom-based instructional assessments. The most difficult dimension for districts to implement will be the systematic, explicit phonics component since many teachers continue to use a “whole language” approach and neglect to concentrate on the direct instruction of early phonemic and phonics skills, particularly coordinated instructional sequences. **Although literature-based programs may be engaging, some of them fail to provide students with the repetitive, cumulative, controlled vocabulary needed so that they acquire the automaticity needed for reading fluency.**

New Jersey’s state plan establishes a Reading First Program Review Panel (reading experts and SEA staff) to screen all reading programs, materials, and assessments for the purposes of this grant and other similar grants. The state approved list of scientifically-based reading programs will be available on the department’s web site, including NJPEP, and will be disseminated to all school districts in the state. Districts and schools will have an opportunity to select materials from this approved list that meet their students’ needs. In addition, the department will use the Critical Elements Analysis for textbook evaluation (Simmons & Kameenui, NCITE & IDEA) to screen all programs and materials. The state will develop a shortened version of this evaluation form to post on the department’s web site so that schools can conduct their own program evaluations. The article titled “Textbook Evaluation and Adoption Practices” (Stein, Stuen, Carnine & Long, 2001) will be provided to teachers as part of the state technical assistance to school districts, and will be posted on the NJPEP web site.

The Reading First Assessment Committee, and NJDOE Reading First staff will screen early diagnostic, screening, and classroom-based assessments to ensure their alignment with scientifically based research and the goals of Reading First. The department will identify and recommend only those assessments considered to be valid and reliable and fully aligned to the goals for Reading First. As noted in Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide (2001), it is strongly recommended that schools administer ongoing assessments that include validated tools for measuring important components of reading and writing. Teachers should know the benchmarks and standards for performance and be able to interpret results for the purposes of helping children achieve the standards (p. 24).

In summary, New Jersey Reading First requires that schools:

1. Implement systematic and explicit instruction in the five components of reading, delivered by the regular classroom teacher, for at least 90 minutes per day using a combination of flexible grouping strategies, including whole and small group instruction;
2. Use reliable and valid screenings to determine those children most at-risk for reading failure;
3. Support and assist struggling readers through a variety of individualized methods and services provided by reading specialists, trained paraprofessionals, and computer technologies; and
4. Implement, analyze, and apply diagnostic and classroom-based assessments to inform instruction.

## **Second Language Learners : Instruction for English Language Learners**

New Jersey will give special attention to second language learners and bilingual/ESL students by identifying factors that have a positive impact upon reading instruction for this population of students. Districts and schools have the responsibility to accommodate the linguistic needs of students with limited English proficiency. New Jersey's Reading First Program will address language issues specific to the following guidelines supported in Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, (Snow, Burns & Griffin, p. 10).

- If language-minority children arrive at school with no proficiency in English, but speak a language for which there are instructional guides, learning materials, and locally available proficient teachers, these children should be taught how to read in their native language. They should acquire proficiency in spoken English and then be taught to extend their skills to reading in English.
- If language-minority children arrive at school with no proficiency in English, but speak a language for which there are insufficient numbers of children to develop a bilingual program, the instructional priority should be to develop the child's proficiency in spoken English. Although print materials may be used to develop understanding of English speech sounds, vocabulary, and syntax, formal reading instruction should occur once an adequate level of proficiency in spoken English has been achieved.

During the technical assistance workshops coordinated by the NJDOE, teachers, including school literacy teams and ESL/bilingual teachers, will attend research-based training sessions on reading strategies for the ESL/bilingual student. There is growing knowledge on how to assist limited English proficient students in acquiring skills in each of the five components outlined by the National Reading Panel, including research showing a relationship between phonological awareness in Spanish and word recognition in English. Teachers will be expected to keep a journal of the kinds of strategies and activities they are implementing in their mainstream, basic skills, and bilingual classrooms to address student needs. The department's Office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues will be instrumental in assisting and selecting consultants for these training sessions. In addition, the department will encourage schools to utilize second language recording tapes that parents can use during shared reading with their children at home. Schools will be encouraged to provide an area at school where parents can participate in shared reading with their children and ESL/bilingual teachers. The school principal will be required to maintain documentation of parent participation in the Reading First Program.

Beginning in Phase I of Reading First, professional development for teachers working with limited English proficient students will be offered. In Phase II of school and district program implementation, a state and regional conferences will focus on scientific-based reading methods for these students. Recent research findings related to second language learners will be disseminated to staff via the internet and electronic mail. Competitive priority will be given to those LEAs that demonstrate a commitment to providing instructional programs that meet the needs of limited English proficient students.

## **Children At Risk for Inappropriate Referral to Special Education**

New Jersey is ranked third in the country for the number of students referred to special education; thus, it is important that the state look at the impact of programs such as Reading First on the number of special education referrals. To ensure that children at risk for inappropriate referral to special education receive early intervention reading instruction, the LEAs will be required to adhere to SBRR recommendations and guidelines in their curriculum design, professional development, and classroom practices. In their proposal, LEAs will address:

- The provision of mandated health screening measures (e.g., audiometric and vision screening) and referral services for preschool and K-3 children to identify factors that increase the risk of school failure (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1&2)
- The establishment and implementation of a coordinated system of intervention and referral services to address the learning, behavior, or health needs of students in the general education population (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7)
- Collaborative efforts with the child study team to assist children at risk for inappropriate placement in special education;
- Strategies to assist teachers and support staff to receive the necessary support services;
- The provision of professional development opportunities for teachers, support staff, child study teams, and others to improve their knowledge and skills regarding early identification of reading/learning problems in children; and
- The provision of transition program(s) to aid students at risk for reading failure.

## **Reading Instruction for Students With Reading Disabilities**

Identifying reading disabilities in young children is critical to ensure that the proper interventions can be in place to target those most in need. Reading readiness has been shown to have a high correlation with reading ability. Children who lack reading readiness at school entry have a harder time learning to read in the primary grades (Hammill and McNutt, 1980; Scarborough, 1998). In addition, a child's home literacy environment may provide an indication of his/her likelihood for reading failure. Hess and Holloway (1994) identified five areas of family functioning that may influence reading development (Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, 1998, p.121) that include:

- The value parents and other family members place on literacy, by reading themselves and encouraging children to read;
- Pressing for achievement by expressing their expectations for achievement, providing reading instruction, and responding to the children's reading initiations and interest;
- The availability and instrumental use of reading materials, including literary experiences in the home that contain children's books and other reading and writing materials; and
- Reading with and to children as well as listening to their child's oral reading.

New Jersey's plan calls for LEAs and participating Reading First schools to provide feedback to the state on children's reading habits (e.g., surveys, pre-and post- reading inventories, parent



surveys). Schools will be encouraged to provide opportunities for recreational reading beyond the school day and incentives that involve family reading.

## **1. C. STATE DEFINITION OF SUBGRANT ELIGIBILITY**

*Which local educational agencies will be eligible for Reading First subgrants?*

New Jersey recognizes that the Reading First grant will allow the state to establish a stronger leadership role in the selection of eligible LEAs and schools. Reading First also enables greater state oversight and monitoring of school progress, classroom instruction, and assessments implemented in the funded schools over the six-year implementation of Reading First.

Approximately 35 school districts will receive Reading First funding to implement research-based reading programs. The local education agency is required to commit a portion of its Title I funds toward the goals of the Reading First program, beginning in year two of program implementation. All eligible LEAs will be notified and invited to participate in the department's technical assistance workshops and submit applications to the department. Only a limited number of LEAs and schools will be funded in order to ensure high quality implementation and evaluation. Therefore, it is imperative that the state and LEAs establish prioritized criteria for those schools that they support as subgrant applicants.

Local decisions regarding which schools should apply must be based on a school needs assessment and a determination by district central administrators as to the level of commitment by school staff to the goals of Reading First. LEAs are encouraged to establish collaborative partnerships with at least one higher education institution. LEA's should only apply for Reading First funding for schools that can fulfill the requirements articulated in NJDOE's Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO).

The first cadre of Reading First districts (Cadre 1) will be awarded funding for three years until the midpoint (end of year three) when the state reviews each participating schools' reading scores to determine if the district should continue receiving Reading First funding. At the end of three years, if funding continues, these Cadre 1 schools will become "Read to Achieve" schools and will be identified and awarded the "Read to Achieve" certificate by the State Board of Education. These schools will be highlighted on the department's web site and will present their reading programs at regional and state conferences. During the second year, three or more of these school sites will be identified as "Reading First Labs" and will provide intensive professional development opportunities and support to teacher leaders, administrators, and school literacy teams. Higher education instructors and state Reading First staff will work cooperatively with these school sites so that they become effective training and demonstration sites.

Those LEAs that are funded after the third year, will continue to expand their Reading First programs to fund more schools in their districts that meet the state and federal guidelines for school eligibility. Any new schools (Cadre 2) will be expected to work closely with the Cadre 1 schools so that their school plans reflect the use of scientifically based reading programs, materials, practices, and professional development.

In accordance with the Federal regulations, local educational agencies that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply through New Jersey's NGO process for Reading First funds:

1. The LEA is among the local educational agencies in the State with the highest numbers **or** percentages of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data; **and**

NJDOE Data Source: 2001 ESPA test results for language arts literacy

2. The LEA has jurisdiction over **at least one** of the following:

- a. A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone, **or** an enterprise community, under part I of subchapter U of chapter I of the Internal Revenue Code;

NJDOE Data Source: LEAs identified as located within an EZ or EC based on the prior data run for the Reading Excellence Act application

- b. A significant number **or** percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under section 1116(b) of ESEA; or

NJDOE Data Source: Title I program list of those schools that are identified as in need of improvement. Category I is used and corresponds to the following indicators: overall ESPA pass rate of <50%;

- c. The highest numbers **or** percentages of children who are counted under section 1124(c) of ESEA, in comparison to other LEAs in the State.

NJDOE Data Source: Actual 2001 Title I poverty count data for New Jersey

Additionally, *state averages* (*i.e.*, average numbers and average percentages based on New Jersey LEA data) were used to determine those LEAs with the greatest need under eligibility criteria 1 and 2c above. After calculating the state averages, the “cut-off” point was identified for each criterion, which was represented by being at or above the average in each case. For example, all LEAs at or above the state average for “below” grade level reading were included in the first data run. However, since the federal guidance requires consideration of grade level reading in addition to **one or more** of the criteria under 2a, 2b, and 2c, those LEAs that did not meet at least one of those additional criteria were necessarily removed from the list.

All LEAs with schools in need of improvement that met criterion 1 were included, *i.e.*, those LEAs with greater than “zero” Category I schools in need of improvement would meet criterion 2b. It was decided that since the pool of districts with schools in need of improvement is relatively small in comparison to the entire pool of districts, that an LEA with even one school in need of improvement would constitute a “high number” or “high percentage” relative to all districts in the state. The eligibility process includes rural and urban areas and incorporates all geographic regions of the state. The table that follows includes information about the number and percentage of students below grade level, the number and percentage of Title I schools in need of improvement, and 2001 Title I poverty information, with Abbott districts noted in boldface.

LEA	(1) 2001 LA ESPA Test - # Below Grade* (Total Students)	% of Students Tested Who are Below Grade Level	(2a) EZ or EC	(2b) # of Schools in School Improvement Categ. I	(2c) Title I Students - Adjusted Formula Count (FY01 Actual)	Title I Students as % of 5-17 Population
6235-COMMUNITY CS	46	80.70%		0	205	38.10%
6629-GRANVILLE CS	55	74.29%		1	509	40.49%
7901-TRENTON COMMUNITY CS	28	65.10%		1	136	40.12%
7420-OCEANSIDE CS	22	62.90%		0	146	49.32%
7820-SCHOMBURG CS	35	62.50%		0	119	24.14%
7290-NEW HORIZONS COMM. CS	44	62.00%		0	205	41.75%
6430-ENGLEWOOD ON THE PALISADE	8	61.50%		0	50	34.48%
4630-SALEM CITY	38	60.30%		1	766	54.77%
0100-ASBURY PARK CITY	159	58.08%		4	1,983	60.59%
7525-PLEASANTVILLE CS FOR AC.	13	56.50%		1	48	14.68%
0540-BRIDGETON CITY	166	54.23%	*	3	2,117	50.85%
2560-LAWNSIDE BORO	13	54.20%		1	90	16.51%
7109-LEAP ACADEMY UNIVERSITY C	24	53.30%		1	370	69.16%
6810-INTERNATIONAL CS OF T	8	53.30%		0	49	57.65%
0680-CAMDEN CITY	653	52.11%	*	18	12,462	56.17%
5210-TRENTON CITY	439	50.81%		12	5,458	34.69%
3570-NEWARK CITY	1,625	50.41%	*	39	23,225	42.10%
6720-HOBOKEN CS	6	50.00%		0	39	19.12%
1210-EAST ORANGE	450	49.17%		9	3,737	28.56%
3970-PASSAIC CITY	390	47.46%		6	3,878	30.96%
6665-GRAY CS	8	47.10%		0	99	41.60%
2390-JERSEY CITY	1,175	46.27%		20	13,293	33.62%
5840-WOODBINE BORO	6	46.20%		1	120	25.42%
5300-UPPER DEERFIELD TWP	47	45.21%		1	220	21.01%
4020-PAULSBORO BORO	33	45.20%		0	492	32.89%
1300-EGG HARBOR CITY	22	44.91%		0	229	29.55%
0110-ATLANTIC CITY	187	44.70%		5	3,160	52.42%
4180-PLEASANTVILLE CITY	115	43.32%		5	543	20.44%
6915-JERSEY CITY GOLDEN DOOR	30	41.10%		0	185	38.38%
1730-GLASSBORO	79	40.71%		0	707	25.90%
3880-CITY OF ORANGE TWP	140	40.67%		6	1,587	30.95%
0380-BEVERLY CITY	15	40.50%		1	170	25.91%
2330-IRVINGTON TOWNSHIP	251	40.41%		9	2,382	20.46%
1460-FAIRFIELD TWP	25	40.38%		0	248	26.11%
7600-QUEEN CITY ACADEMY CS	4	40.00%		0	18	14.75%
2060-HARRISON TOWN	45	39.11%		1	354	16.26%
3430-MOUNT HOLLY TWP	38	39.08%		1	577	32.73%
4160-PLAINFIELD CITY	204	38.27%		9	1,924	21.83%
4070-PENNS GRV-CARNEY'S PT REG	67	38.22%		1	733	26.48%
1770-GLOUCESTER CITY	53	38.14%		0	300	11.91%
7520-PLEASANTECH ACADEMY CS	11	37.90%		1	62	21.68%
2400-KEANSBURG BORO	61	37.62%		0	347	13.68%
4010-PATERSON CITY	665	37.46%		20	10,840	33.80%
5790-WILDWOOD CITY	28	37.33%		0	469	65.55%
5860-WOODBURY CITY	47	37.32%		0	497	22.71%
5820-WINSLOW TWP	170	37.10%		0	588	14.25%

LEA	(1) 2001 LA ESPA Test - # Below Grade* (Total Students)	% of Students Tested Who are Below Grade Level	(2a) EZ or EC	(2b) # of Schools in School Improvement Categ. I	(2c) Title I Students - Adjusted Formula Count (FY01 Actual)	Title I Students as % of 5-17 Population
1370-ENGLEWOOD CITY	177	35.90%		2	698	18.01%
2770-LONG BRANCH CITY	129	35.89%		2	1,955	37.93%
0600-BURLINGTON CITY	39	35.80%		1	411	24.38%
2190-HILLSIDE TWP	84	35.46%		4	332	8.72%
4290-RAHWAY CITY	99	34.97%		0	558	13.90%
5390-VINELAND CITY	247	34.96%	*	3	2,279	20.28%
4090-PERTH AMBOY CITY	229	34.91%		2	3,255	37.32%
2520-LAKEWOOD TWP	131	34.85%		0	3,216	31.89%
4270-PROSPECT PARK BORO	30	34.48%		1	60	7.57%
3230-MILLVILLE CITY	116	33.54%		3	973	17.94%
4050-PEMBERTON TWP	139	33.09%		3	1,198	15.36%
4450-RIVERSIDE TWP	31	32.91%		2	92	6.08%
4540-ROSELLE BORO	73	32.75%		3	203	6.09%
1570-FRANKLIN BORO	22	32.36%		0	105	13.69%
1320-ELIZABETH CITY	454	32.21%	*	15	7,062	34.52%
3530-NEW BRUNSWICK CITY	104	31.19%		4	2,109	40.37%
4100-PHILLIPSBURG TOWN	60	30.81%		2	596	19.89%
3500-NEPTUNE CITY	83	30.68%		0	135	18.34%
3510-NEPTUNE TWP	10	30.68%		2	656	13.16%
1470-FAIRVIEW BORO	35	30.36%		2	189	12.72%
3590-NEWTON TOWN	27	28.75%		0	174	11.95%
0810-CHESILHURST	4	28.60%		1	3	1.53%
7830-SOARING HEIGHTS CS	4	28.60%		0	71	44.38%
5240-UNION CITY	215	27.85%		3	3,292	32.22%
3130-MIDDLE TWP	54	27.81%		0	474	17.57%
2210-HOBOKEN CITY	47	27.62%		0	1,634	40.64%
2670-LINDENWOLD BORO	50	27.07%		1	221	12.15%
3670-NORTH PLAINFIELD BORO	58	26.97%		1	378	11.24%
4060-PENNSAUKEN TWP	121	26.92%		2	633	9.99%
0220-BAYONNE CITY	152	26.79%		4	1,444	15.55%
0950-COMMERCIAL TWP	19	26.70%		2	314	27.64%
5290-UNION TWP	164	26.58%		0	617	8.84%
0490-BOUND BROOK BORO	18	26.10%		0	266	16.30%
2660-LINDEN CITY	110	25.90%		1	581	10.46%
4820-SOMERVILLE BORO	31	25.27%		0	301	16.12%
0860-CLAYTON BORO	28	25.01%		1	156	9.41%
5900-WOODLYNNE BORO	6	25.00%		0	124	24.12%
6320-DISCOVERY CS	3	25.00%		0	26	35.14%
7720-THE RED BANK CS	3	25.00%		1	15	20.55%
1610-FRANKLIN TWP	124	24.60%		0	885	12.73%
1920-HALEDON BORO	26	24.31%		0	119	14.58%
2970-MANSFIELD TWP	26	24.29%		0	134	16.63%
1700-GARFIELD CITY	63	23.91%		1	640	17.11%
5120-SWEDESBORO-WOOLWICH	18	23.70%		0	111	22.79%
2570-LAWRENCE TWP	13	23.67%		0	71	13.08%
3410-MOUNT ARLINGTON BORO	13	23.56%		0	89	12.54%
2760-LONG BEACH ISLAND	12	23.53%		0	95	20.52%
3610-NORTH BERGEN TWP	117	23.03%		1	1,113	15.53%

LEA	(1) 2001 LA ESPA Test - # Below Grade* (Total Students)	% of Students Tested Who are Below Grade Level	(2a) EZ or EC	(2b) # of Schools in School Improvement Categ. I	(2c) Title I Students - Adjusted Formula Count (FY01 Actual)	Title I Students as % of 5-17 Population
4360-RED BANK BORO	13	22.80%		1	252	24.40%
3650-NORTH HANOVER TWP	39	20.82%		0	232	12.41%
0250-BELLEVILLE TOWN	71	20.82%		1	516	11.28%
2690-LITTLE EGG HARBOR TWP	48	20.78%		0	242	13.89%
2840-LOWER TWP	60	20.48%		0	503	20.85%
0880-CLEMENTON BORO	11	20.30%		0	140	22.62%
3820-OCEAN TWP	18	20.18%		0	231	21.53%
3910-PALISADES PARK	24	20.17%		0	290	14.35%
0500-BRADLEY BEACH BORO	6	20.00%		0	227	32.45%
0750-CARTERET BORO	57	19.75%		0	679	19.76%
1860-HACKENSACK CITY	61	19.71%		1	697	16.79%
4140-PITMAN BORO	25	19.42%		0	258	13.29%
5760-WEYMOUTH TWP	5	19.20%		0	49	12.31%
1640-FREEHOLD BORO	22	18.90%		0	214	13.38%
3540-NEW HANOVER TWP	3	18.70%		1	287	16.21%
1200-EAST NEWARK BORO	3	18.70%		0	57	15.32%
5020-STAFFORD TWP	57	18.37%		0	340	19.69%
4130-PISCATAWAY TWP	95	18.25%		0	395	5.28%
6635-GREATER BRUNSWICK CS	2	18.20%		1	16	11.11%
4590-RUNNEMEDE BORO	17	17.89%		0	213	13.55%
5805-WILLINGBORO TWP	73	17.51%		4	868	10.65%
2360-JACKSON TWP	124	17.34%		0	494	6.40%
2410-KEARNY TOWN	54	17.03%		2	396	6.89%
1850-GUTTENBERG TOWN	11	16.90%		0	264	25.71%
6420-THE ELYSIAN CS OF HOBOKEN	4	16.70%		0	42	20.49%
1030-DELANCO TWP	8	16.31%		0	78	12.58%
0900-CLIFTON CITY	103	16.18%		1	938	9.00%
1330-ELK TWP	8	16.00%		0	64	11.76%
5230-UNION BEACH	14	15.72%		0	202	14.26%
1590-FRANKLIN TWP	33	15.61%		0	279	11.57%
2160-HIGHLANDS BORO	4	15.40%		0	62	15.27%
3890-OXFORD TWP	4	15.40%		0	50	15.11%
3920-PALMYRA BORO	10	15.15%		0	160	13.59%
5680-WEST ORANGE TOWN	66	14.99%		1	287	5.22%
0410-BLOOMFIELD TWP	67	14.58%		1	410	7.18%
5150-TEANECK TWP	49	14.56%		0	400	6.21%
5190-TOMS RIVER REGIONAL	201	14.41%		0	2,213	10.40%
3280-MONROE TWP	59	14.18%		0	900	14.52%
3385-MORRIS SCHOOL DISTRICT	44	14.08%		0	524	10.07%
0530-BRICK TWP	122	13.74%		0	1,071	7.91%
5500-WASHINGTON TWP	101	13.64%		0	462	4.25%
4660-SAYREVILLE BORO	59	13.33%		0	371	6.38%
1950-HAMILTON TWP	110	12.48%		4	641	4.33%
2290-HOWELL TWP	96	11.72%		0	478	6.69%
5670-WEST NEW YORK TOWN	44	11.71%		1	1,851	30.83%
1780-GLOUCESTER TWP	103	11.35%		0	454	5.05%
5850-WOODBRIDGE TWP	99	10.82%		0	824	5.76%

LEA	(1) 2001 LA ESPA Test - # Below Grade* (Total Students)	% of Students Tested Who are Below Grade Level	(2a) EZ or EC	(2b) # of Schools in School Improvement Categ. I	(2c) Title I Students - Adjusted Formula Count (FY01 Actual)	Title I Students as % of 5-17 Population
3160-MIDDLETOWN TWP	82	10.23%		0	571	3.83%
2480-LACEY TWP	36	10.00%		0	550	10.96%
1290-EDISON TWP	89	9.85%		0	773	5.13%
5360-VERNON TWP	41	8.63%		0	455	8.12%
3845-OLD BRIDGE TWP	55	8.54%		0	716	6.75%
1170-EAST BRUNSWICK TWP	40	6.49%		0	405	4.62%
<b>CUT-OFF/STATE AVERAGE</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15.00%</b>			<b>368</b>	<b>11.50%</b>

## SELECTION CRITERIA FOR AWARDING SUBGRANTS

*To what extent does the proposal address subgrant selection criteria and evaluate coordination among all local Reading First activities?*

Not all eligible schools will be selected for inclusion in a district's Reading First Program. As part of an assurance that the districts and schools have "buy-in" for the Reading First efforts, the state will require in its Notification of Grant Opportunities (NGO) that eligible LEAs and school(s) sign assurances to show support by administration, principals, and teachers. In addition, LEAs may apply other criteria for school selection, but these criteria must be explicitly stated in the LEAs application to the state. From the list of eligible schools, the following criteria should be used to select those schools that will be included in the district's Reading First application. At each school, the principal and K-3 teachers, including special education and bilingual/ESL teachers, must agree to:

- Provide at least ninety minutes of uninterrupted daily reading instruction for all students;
- Participate fully in all professional development activities required at the state, regional, and local levels;
- Provide release time for key individuals (e.g., school literacy teams) to plan, coordinate, and execute Reading First activities at the school/district level;
- Select a common core research based K-3 reading program that is implemented with fidelity by all teachers at a given grade level;
- Agree that all teachers at a given grade level will administer a common set of assessments selected by the state and/or district that are aligned with the goals of Reading First;
- Agree to seek a partnership with higher education on the Reading First initiative to support the professional development of teachers and administrators;
- Agree to work cooperatively with a reading coach assigned to the school;
- Share effective reading strategies with peers in the school, district, and the state;
- Agree to work with staff from the New Jersey Department and designated consultants to provide more intensive instruction to children who fail to make adequate progress in reading;
- Agree to complete state and federal surveys, forms, and other documentation as required by the Reading First program; and,
- Agree to monitor student progress by recording/charting student data and reporting the data to school administrators and others responsible for Reading First implementation.

New Jersey assures that each LEA to which the State education agency makes a subgrant will :

- Participate in professional development for teachers and other instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on SBRR;
- Implement valid and reliable assessments in K-3 classrooms as prescribed by the state; and
- Select classroom reading materials based upon SBRR from the state-approved programs/materials list;
- Identify methods to provide additional or more intense instruction to children who are below grade level in reading; and
- Provide strong instructional leadership.



There will be strong connections made to the Early Reading First program by providing assistance in the development of reading readiness in early childhood and kindergarten students. In addition, the LEAs must demonstrate how they will ensure that all students, including limited English proficient students, have intervention/supplemental programs in reading. LEAs must also describe how the reading First program will meet the needs of students who:

- Have been identified as having one or more disabilities;
- Are at risk of being referred to special education due to reading deficiencies;
- Have been evaluated under Section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with Section 614(b)(5) of such Act, have not been identified as being a child with a disability (as defined in Section 602 of such Act); and/or
- Are eligible for adaptations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Schools To Be Served**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the criteria LEAs use to identify schools to be served through Reading First, as well as LEA's capacity to support these schools?*

As part of the NGO process, LEAs will have to describe how they will evaluate each eligible school in their district to determine whether the school should participate in Reading First. The NJDOE district eligibility list includes those schools in need of improvement. A list of these schools will be made available to eligible districts as part of the NGO process. These eligible schools must be targeted by the district for the Reading First funding. Programs must focus on grades K-3 and districts must ensure that each school is committed to implementing Reading First components identified in the previous section.

Schools not meeting the eligibility criteria will receive support via internet-based professional development opportunities (e.g., online workshops, dissemination of information about effective reading programs and strategies, discussion boards on scientifically based reading methods). The cadre of eligible non-funded schools will participate in professional training opportunities and high-quality, intensive training institutes throughout the year. Eventually, state-sponsored professional development opportunities that address the goals of Reading First as well as the tenets of the “*No Child Left Behind Act*” will be available for all New Jersey school districts

### **Instructional Assessments**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments that LEAs and schools will use, including the validity and reliability of these assessments?*

The state will require LEAs to select and employ valid and reliable instructional assessments that measure the five components of reading. This will be accomplished through a process involving state-level prescreening of assessment instruments and final approval by the state. A common set of assessments, including an annual outcome-based assessment measure (e.g., Terra Nova), will be employed for all Reading First schools in order to provide the state with consistent data measures across K-3 grades. Even though a common set of assessments will be identified by the state and implemented in Reading First schools, LEAs will continue to have flexibility in the

selection of classroom-based assessment measures that are supported by scientific research and the goals of Reading First (e.g., DRA).

As a part of the application process, LEAs will be required to submit a school and grade-level action plan for assessment and incorporate the “Action Plan for Implementing a District-wide Early Assessment System”(cited in references Good, Simmons, and Kameenui (2001), Secretary of Education’s Reading Academy, February 2002), see Appendix F. The Department of Education and Reading First staff will meet with district- and school-level personnel to assist with the development of a district plan to implement their early assessment system. Prior to site visits, the Department of Education will schedule technical assistance sessions to inform LEAs about this requirement. This information will be posted on the Department of Education’s web site at [www.doe.state.nj.us/education](http://www.doe.state.nj.us/education)

Applicants must specify the necessary steps in implementing an effective assessment program; document the degree of implementation needed; describe who will be responsible; and include a timeline and target completion dates. In addition, LEA applicants must describe a procedure to purchase and distribute assessment measures to schools and identify individuals and training to ensure high quality test administration. They will need to specify who will score measures, who will enter data and manage the database, who will crosscheck data entry to ensure reliability, and who will report to the New Jersey Department of Education. Finally, they will need to determine when and how information/results will be disseminated to teachers, provide information on how to use data to inform instruction, and schedule feedback and professional development sessions.

LEA applications must address the following assessment areas:

- Measure selection and acquisition;
- Professional development;
- Data collection (process and schedule);
- Scoring and data management; and
- Information reporting and use.

A comprehensive reading program should involve ongoing assessment of the five areas of reading instruction. This ongoing assessment does not have to be excessively time consuming, and may involve assessment techniques that teachers are already using such as periodic checks of a student’s knowledge of letter sounds, analysis of children’s invented spellings, or routine writing prompts. Ongoing assessment should be carefully planned and organized, so that children’s difficulties can be targeted early on. Effective assessment requires knowledge about a variety of assessments, as well as the understanding that assessment is ongoing and occurs over time. LEA applicants must demonstrate this understanding in their Reading First plans.

LEAs must provide a list and description of all early assessments used in the eligible K-3 schools, and describe how these state-approved instruments will be used for instructional purposes and monitoring of student progress. As mandated in the Reading First legislation, funded schools will be required to implement screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessment tools as strategies for the ongoing measurement of student progress in the five components of reading. LEAs will be required to describe how all three forms of assessment will be used to inform classroom practices, and how these assessments will be used to determine those students who are most at-risk for not meeting the goals of Reading First. The New Jersey

Department of Education's Regional Offices will provide ongoing technical assistance and monitor all Reading First sites to ensure effective implementation of all assessment components and fidelity to scientifically based reading research.

In addition, the LEA application must describe intervention services, including tutorial assistance, that will be available to students most at risk for reading failure and not meeting state language arts literacy benchmarks, and the K-3 reading accomplishments of Reading First. Furthermore, the LEA will be asked to describe how instruction will be individualized to meet the needs of all struggling readers, including limited English proficient students and students who may be at risk for being inappropriately referred to special education.

The LEA application must clearly demonstrate their understanding of SBRR as it relates to early assessments and how they intend to use research-based screening and diagnostic assessments to monitor student achievement of early literacy benchmarks. Furthermore, the application must outline how students will be grouped for instruction and how instruction will be modified to meet individual student needs. New Jersey Reading First schools must use one of the following examples of screening and diagnostic assessment tools, or other state-approved instrument as determined by the Reading First Assessment Committee, at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to monitor student progress:

- *Texas Primary Reading Inventory* – The TPRI was developed by the Texas Education Agency and the Center for Academic and Reading Skills. It includes screening and inventory sections (K-2) and is administered by the classroom teacher to individual students. The TPRI assesses: (Kindergarten) phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, book and print awareness, and listening comprehension; (Grade 1) also includes word reading, word accuracy and fluency, listening and reading comprehension; (Grade 2) only graphophonemic knowledge, word reading, reading accuracy and fluency, and reading comprehension.
- *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening* – PALS was developed by the Virginia State Department of Education with the University of Virginia. PALS-K is an early screening and diagnostic assessment and measures knowledge of the following: phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, knowledge of letter sounds, concept of word and word recognition in isolation. PALS- 1-3 measures phonemic awareness, alphabetic recognition, knowledge of letter sounds and spelling, concept of word, word recognition in isolation, and oral reading of passages.
- *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* - DIBELS is a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early literacy skills. They assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and automaticity and fluency with the code. The results can be used to evaluate individual student development, as well as provide grade-level feedback toward validated instructional objectives. These measurement tools may be used in conjunction with other approved diagnostic assessments.

***Developmental Reading Assessment*** (Beaver,1997); DRA is an informal reading inventory using leveled texts that allows teachers to assess early book handling skills, oral reading accuracy and understanding of text through a retelling process. This instrument is a standardized assessment for identifying students deficient in reading and in need of additional support in grades 1-3. The Development Reading Assessment was field tested in 1996 with the assistance of Dr. E. Jane Williams, Ohio State University. Dr. Williams completed a reliability study in 1999 utilizing a nationally representative sample of students (N=306). Inter-rater reliability was determined using a second and third scorer of the DRA. Dr. Will A. Weber, Researcher, University of Houston conducted validity and reliability studies of DRA and EDL (Spanish version of DRA). His studies include data relative to Observer Agreement for English and Spanish; Test-Retest Reliability for English and Spanish; and Criterion Validity for English and Spanish. In October 2000, Dr Williams conducted an additional study on the Alternative Developmental Reading Assessment: Development and Field Test Results. There is also additional information available on using DRA with students at risk for dyslexia. A complete DRA Technical Manual is available upon request.

**DRA Online Management System** provides a secure environment for teachers to archive each student's assessment results for use in planning instruction. The DRA Online Management allows for the desegregation of data for reporting purposes that is vital to the success of Reading First. DRA Online Management System accomplishes the following:

- Tracks students to monitor progress;
- Groups students to maximize instruction;
- Imports data from other data systems;
- Exports DRA data to spreadsheets for comparison with other assessment results; and
- Provides multiple reporting formats to continually assist in determining progress.

The external evaluator will assist the NJ Department of Education's Reading First Assessment Committee with final selections of assessment tools used for the purposes of Reading First. In addition, teachers must implement ongoing, classroom-based assessments routinely in order to gauge student performance and progress toward individual learning goals.

In order to minimize additional testing burdens, Reading First program evaluation will allow districts to continue current assessments in use by the LEA (e.g., SFA assessments, Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Awareness), provided that these instruments meet acceptable standards of reliability and validity for measuring reading achievement, and are based on scientific research and the five essential components of reading. By allowing LEAs to continue with existing classroom-based assessments, schools can gauge student performance relative to earlier performance on these same measures within the district.

Summative evaluation of Reading First school programs will be done through implementation of a new statewide **Third Grade Test**, and also through annual testing of K-2 student population samples using an appropriate measure (e.g., the **Terra Nova**). The Terra Nova assesses phonemic awareness, phonics and other word recognition strategies, vocabulary, and comprehension. This summative data will provide uniform information on student achievement across all student populations in Reading First schools. **The Terra Nova has strong evidence of reliability and validity, and the subtests of phonemic awareness and decoding will be part of the Terra Nova administration.** The external evaluator will ultimately recommend to the Department of Education which of these two instruments, or perhaps an alternative, should

be implemented for the purposes of New Jersey's grant initiative. Dr. Tim Shanahan, project advisor and well-known national consultant, will be instrumental in providing the necessary leadership and assessment expertise to New Jersey's selection of test instruments for Reading First (see resume).

All Abbott schools will be required to use a system of data collection, reporting, and analysis for the purposes of accountability in whole school reform. The Department divisions, related to whole school reform efforts, will hold a summer institute in August 2002 to introduce a number of data-driven options to these 30 districts. Data systems assist schools with comprehensive data analysis to guide instruction and assessment, and measure student and school progress over time. These teacher- friendly data analysis tools or templates (in both print and electronic formats) enable teachers to report and analyze disaggregated student data on a regular basis. This data-driven system strongly supports the goals of Reading First and school accountability requirements, and assists classroom teachers, school principals, and school literacy teams with decision-making strategies. In addition, all stakeholders (e.g., board members, parents, central office personnel) will be informed of individual school progress through data that is disaggregated based upon set criteria. These stakeholders will also be able to quickly access individual student, classroom, and school data. In addition, this data-driven system will encourage LEAs to create a district-level data warehouse that will allow districts to efficiently meet their state and federal reporting requirements. The state will make this product information available at technical assistance and informational workshops that demonstrate state-approved scientifically based research programs, including assessments and data analysis systems. All products shared will have been previewed and approved by the state Department of Education.

### **Instructional Strategies and Programs**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the instructional strategies and programs based on scientifically based reading research that LEAs and schools will use?*

The LEA will be required to establish reading goals for each of its participating schools aligned to Reading First and scientific research on the essential components of reading instruction. Successful achievement of these goals will require significant changes in instructional practices, methods, and programs. Process goals must be clearly articulated in each district's plan of action. All eligible schools will be required to describe how they examined their instructional strategies and programs, and how these methods support findings from scientifically based research on the essential components of reading instruction. Subgrantees must provide an assurance that their reading program plans include alignment of their K-3 classroom strategies and instructional program to grade-level standards for effective reading instruction (National Reading Council, 1998), see Appendix H in proposal. The LEA must also include a description for how the essential components of reading will be incorporated into the overall professional development design for the school(s) and district. These key findings will be disseminated (in early August 2002) through regional technical assistance workshops provided by the Department of Education and via the NJPEP internet site.

The process for evaluating subgrant selection of instructional programs and strategies will involve a three-step process that requires LEAs to establish a textbook adoption committee at the district/school level for the purposes of Reading First. LEAs must develop a procedure for evaluating commercially developed materials and instructional programs and provide an assurance these steps are supported by Reading First leadership in their schools/district.

## Process for Selection of Programs and Materials for Reading First Program

### Step 1: Vendor Review of Materials

The NJ Department of Education will send a letter to all commercial vendors who operate in New Jersey and request feedback from those vendors interested in participating in Reading First activities. Only those programs that have a K-3 instructional program will be considered for evaluation by the review panel. Acceptable vendors must provide scientific documentation as to the validity of their instructional reading programs and/or assessment programs by:

1. Providing scientifically valid evidence that the program is effective at the grade levels being served, and with children whose general characteristics are similar to those being served in New Jersey elementary schools; and
2. Providing evidence that the program has been carefully reviewed, and that it contains the instructional elements and characteristics defined as scientifically based, as described in the Department of Education's letter;
3. Providing evidence that the five essential components of reading instruction are fully addressed and that direct, systematic instruction focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, comprehension skills and strategies, vocabulary and concept development, fluency, spelling and writing strategies; and
4. Providing evidence that the program is based on sound principles of instructional design.

### Step 2: State Level Review

Prior to LEAs selecting reading programs and materials for their Reading First programs, a State level screening panel will be organized to review commercial programs for inclusion on a Department of Education approved list of scientifically based reading programs. Once acceptable programs have been established, this information will be disseminated to all school districts, particularly those eligible LEAs who are considering new textbook adoptions and need guidelines for evaluating programs for the purposes of Reading First. After careful review of the literature and information presented in the article "Textbook Evaluation and Adoption Practices" (Stein, Stuen, Carnine, Long, 2001), the NJ Department of Education plans to disseminate this article statewide in an effort to promote the critical importance of research-based, textbook adoption methods. In addition, the information presented in this article will be used to provide focused training to school textbook adoption teams, prior to Reading First implementation by schools, and thereafter to other districts around the state.

The State-level screening panel has designed a scoring rubric to determine state-approved programs and materials that addresses the following items (see p.48 ):

- Is the scientific evidence provided valid and reliable to ensure program effectiveness at the grade levels being served, and with children whose general characteristics are similar to those being served in Reading First schools?

- Is there ample evidence that the program has been carefully reviewed, and that it contains the instructional elements and characteristics defined as scientifically based, as described in Reading First legislation?
- Is there evidence that the program employs an explicit phonics approach supported by considerable research?
- Do the text selections contain a higher percentage of decodable words (words that can be sounded out) than sight words?

The NJ Department of Education is providing the necessary state leadership and guidance to LEAs so that districts/schools use commercially approved products that meet state and federal guidelines for this grant. The goal of the State screening process is to generate a more manageable number of textbooks and materials to be evaluated. Once the number of programs has been reduced, the screening panel will then conduct a more comprehensive evaluation. A more comprehensive evaluation will consider specific criteria, based on a set of guidelines on empirically derived principles of instructional design (Stein, Carnine, & Dixon, 1998), during the decision-making process, and prior to the final selection of approved reading programs. The table below highlights key questions that the panel will look to address:

#### **Evaluation Criteria for Comprehensive Review of Programs**

Is content organized around big ideas?
Do the curriculum materials contain explicit strategies?
Do the curriculum materials provide opportunities for teachers to scaffold instruction?
To what degree are the skills and concepts intentionally and strategically integrated?
Is the review provided in the instructional materials sufficient, cumulative, and varied?

#### **Step 3: District Review and Materials Selection Process**

The LEA, in collaboration and consensus with a district/school adoption committee or school-level staff, must document the validity of their choice of instructional programs and strategies for Reading First schools. In order to determine whether selected strategies and programs by LEAs meet the requirements for Reading First, the following evaluation criteria will be used to review district plans and monitor program implementation:

- Does the program show evidence of efficacy through carefully designed experimental studies?
- Does the program ensure that high priority standards are taught in sufficient depth, breadth, and quality so that all learners achieve or exceed expected levels of proficiency?

Chall & Squire (1991), Farr, Tulley, & Rayford (1987), and Miller (1986) all agree that the evaluation process is important to the selection of high quality textbooks and materials. To this end, district plans must describe the evaluation process the LEA intends to use to select materials/programs/strategies. The State will provide a list of criteria/elements for reviewing

grade-level materials (see p.48 and Appendix E). LEAs should describe how they intend to provide training, in addition to state-level training, to educators serving on district materials/textbook adoption committees for the purposes of this grant.

It is critical that participating schools understand and demonstrate that Reading First is not an “add on” program to existing reading and literacy initiatives. Instead, the Reading First program should become a centerpiece of a school’s early literacy reading and writing programs. Those schools that expect to receive Early Reading First funding should coordinate their instructional efforts with the Reading First K-3 program.

LEAs must establish an uninterrupted block of time of at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction daily. Reading First schools will be encouraged to establish a motivational program that extends beyond the school day and encourages students to increase their recreational reading time. Most importantly, Reading First schools will be expected to focus on the mechanics of reading that will lead to greater and wider reading and align their reading programs with the revised New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for language arts literacy, particularly the reading standard (3.1) for the purposes of this grant.



## SCORING RUBRIC FOR STATE-APPROVED PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>3</b> Exemplary	<b>2</b> Satisfactory	<b>1</b> Not meeting Criteria
<b>Does the program provide:</b>			
1. Evidence that the program has been carefully reviewed, and that it contains the instructional elements and characteristics defined as scientifically based?			
2. Evidence that the five components of reading instruction are fully addressed and that direct, systematic instruction focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, comprehension skills and strategies, vocabulary and concept development, fluency, spelling and writing strategies?			
3. Evidence that the program is based on sound principles of instructional design?			
4. Evidence that is valid and reliable to ensure program effectiveness at the grade levels being served, and with children whose general characteristics are similar to those being served in Reading First Schools;			
5. Evidence that the program employs an explicit phonics approach supported by considerable research?			
6. Text selections that contain a higher percentage of decodable words (words that can be sounded out) than sight words?			
7. Content that is organized around big ideas?			
8. Curriculum materials that provide opportunities for teachers to scaffold instruction?			
9. A range of skills and concepts intentionally and strategically integrated?			
10. Instructional materials that are sufficient, cumulative, and varied?			

The state identified the following guidelines to use with districts in describing SBRR:

## **\*\*What is Scientifically Based Research?**

- Research that has been conducted by an independent, third party;
- Evidence of a study or studies with experimental and control groups;
- Evidence that the program has been replicated in similar populations across the country;
- Evidence of a longitudinal study of at least three years.

The NJ Department of Education will evaluate LEAs and schools to determine whether selected instructional strategies and programs meet the following requirements:

1. Choose programs grounded in scientifically based reading research (SBRR);
2. Select and implement SBRR comprehensive reading programs, without layering selected programs on top of non-researched programs already in place;
3. Implement scientific-based reading programs that provide instruction to all K-3 students, including ESL/bilingual;
4. Teach the five essentials of effective reading instruction;
5. Provide a program of explicit and systematic instructional strategies, and instruction that has a coordinated sequence;
6. Align all instructional materials with comprehensive reading program;
7. Develop a clear instructional plan to use scientific-based instructional strategies to accelerate student performance and monitor progress of students reading below grade level;
8. Provide students with explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness (e.g., isolating and manipulating the sounds in words); phonics (e.g., blending sounds and using decodable texts that allow students opportunities to practice); fluency (e.g., repeated oral reading with assistance); vocabulary development (e.g., repeated exposure to words and word meanings in a variety of contexts); and comprehension (e.g., summarizing text, building on background knowledge, asking and answering questions, graphic and semantic organizers); and
9. Align comprehensive SBRR programs with state standards to ensure that students reach high levels of proficiency on state reading and language arts assessments.

### **1.D.4 Instructional Materials**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the instructional materials based on scientifically-based reading research that LEAs and schools will use?*

The LEA must document the validity of its choice of instructional materials for Reading First schools in the same way that it provided evidence about the choice of its comprehensive reading program (see previous section on instructional strategies and programs). LEAs and schools must use instructional materials that are fully aligned with selected SBRR reading programs and support the teaching of the five components of reading. Instruction materials must include the elements of explicit instructional strategies, a coordinated instructional sequence, and ample opportunities for students to practice.

Several ways that the NJDOE will interact with districts in materials selection will include planned online support, regional technical assistance from approved vendors demonstrating their programs, and informative sessions by experts who understand scientific reading research. The Reading First Leadership Team will be instrumental in materials selection and coordinating efforts for evaluation of program/materials selection. The state will provide specific information to LEAs in selecting appropriate materials for intended purposes such as supplemental and intervention types of materials. During the early technical assistance by the state, instructional materials/ purposes of instructional materials will be incorporated into the training sessions. In addition, a charge of the Governor's Early Literacy Task force is to develop a blueprint of strategies and best practices for the primary grades. This information will greatly assist the state in identification of scientifically based research materials that support the goals of Governor James E. McGreevey and Reading First (available July 2002).

#### **1.D.5. Instructional Leadership**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the instructional leadership that LEAs and schools will provide for their scientifically based reading programs?*

Within the Reading First state application, LEAs must describe how they plan to select individuals with the sufficient time and expertise in reading instruction (e.g. reading specialists, reading supervisors, early reading coaches/mentors) to be part of a School Literacy Team to ensure smooth implementation of the Reading First program. LEAs must attach a short biography or resume for all identified School Literacy Team personnel that includes any background knowledge/experience in the understanding of scientifically based reading research and the five components of reading. The LEA must have clear duties assigned to each member of the School Literacy Team and describe how the literacy team will work together to achieve the goals for Reading First.

In addition, LEA applications must describe how School Literacy Teams will receive advanced training in the essential components of reading. The LEA must ensure that the school has sufficient authority and responsibility for aligning its instructional program and materials to the goals for Reading First. In addition, the LEA must demonstrate in its application how the Reading First program will be aligned to the New Jersey language arts literacy standards. Schools must describe how they plan to evaluate school and student reading progress, using achievement data and progress monitoring. The application must describe how classroom and school decisions will be based on the continuous monitoring of student and teacher data.

The state will provide on-going technical assistance and training to Reading First schools to improve their knowledge and skills related to scientifically based reading research and the improvement of reading instruction. All state-sponsored training will closely adhere to the Reading First Guidance and the findings by the National Research Council (1998) in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*.

#### **School Literacy Team: Roles and Responsibilities**

All participating Reading First schools must establish a three-member School Literacy Team, as well as a Steering Committee, to provide oversight into the planning, implementation, and progress reporting. Each member of the team plays a critical role in the implementation and success of the Reading First initiative. The School Literacy Team includes: the principal or building level administrator, the reading coach, and the Reading First coordinator.

## **The Role of the Principal**

The school principal is critical to the success of the School Literacy Team. For the purposes of Reading First, the principal, along with the Reading First coordinator, co-chairs the School Steering Committee. Since the principal will be directly involved in all Reading First efforts, both the LEA and the principal must assure commitment of the necessary time and expertise to the Reading First program. The principal must support high quality professional development for all school staff, including other building administrators, K-3 teachers, including those in special education and/or ESL/bilingual programs, and support staff who work with K-3 students.

School principals will demonstrate commitment to Reading First by:

- Serving as an instructional leader for Reading First and supporting the strategic planning and implementation necessary for the success of the Reading First program;
- Coordinating school-wide plans to align with the goals of Reading First;
- Working with Reading First coordinator to plan and organize professional development activities;
- Managing all fiscal responsibilities related to Reading First, in coordination with the district central office;
- Observing teachers, using a state-developed rubric, to ensure integrity of the Reading First program and alignment to scientifically based research methods; and
- Reporting the progress of the Reading First program to the local Board of Education, central administrators, teachers, parents, and others in the community.

## **The Role of the Reading First Coach**

The reading coach is an integral part of the School Literacy Team. Reading coaches provide expert support and on-going assistance to classroom teachers during all phases of the Reading First program. LEAs will be required to identify expert reading coaches for the purposes of Reading First and determine, based on need, if a coach should serve one or more schools. Reading First coaches will:

- Provide daily support, including mentoring and coaching, to teachers of K-3 classrooms;
- Provide in-class support for teachers by assisting in screening and diagnostic activities, monitoring intervention strategies, and monitoring student progress;
- Model scientific-based reading strategies for teachers in classrooms;
- Facilitate study groups and provide workshops for teachers and administrators, incorporating pedagogical materials aligned to the five essential components of reading,

effective strategies for reading instruction, scientifically based reading assessment strategies, and analysis and utilization of student data to ensure student progress;

- Collaborate with and become an integral part of the School Literacy Team and work closely with district Reading First coordinator to plan professional development;
- Work with school administrators to monitor and plan a high quality reading program for the entire school; and,
- Participate and receive high quality training in topics aligned with scientifically based reading research and methods.

### **The Role of the Reading First Coordinator**

Reading First Coordinators must be experienced elementary educators and will be more effective if they have K-3 teaching experience as well. Reading First coordinators must hold both a New Jersey instructional and supervisor certificate and must be willing to commit the time and expertise needed to implement the district's Reading First initiative. LEAs must complete a statement of assurance that their school literacy teams will attend all state-directed training sessions and provide on-going, sustained training to principals, teachers, and others on SBRR and the five components of reading.

Reading First Coordinators will:

- Serve as the coordinator of assessment for the school;
- Oversee implementation and monitoring of the Reading First program;
- Work with the school literacy team (principal and reading coach) to coordinate professional development activities related to Reading First;
- Schedule all training for teachers and administrators related to Reading First;
- Serve as the liaison between schools, higher education partners, and the Department of Education regional office;
- Communicate bimonthly with school staff, LEA staff, and SEA staff about Reading First programs and outcomes; and
- Collect, record, and share all data for Reading First activities with the state and USDOE.
- Work with local community to publicize Reading First activities to parents and the community at large.

## **District and School Based Professional Development**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the professional development plan related to their scientifically based reading programs that LEAS and schools will implement?*

Professional development plans at the local level must clearly align with the selected instructional program for Reading First, including its research base, and the revised New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for language arts literacy (2002). In addition, these plans must be aligned to the K-3 accomplishments established by the National Research Council (1998). It should be noted that the revised New Jersey language arts literacy standards for reading (3.1) are closely aligned to the K-3 accomplishments developed by the National Research Council (1998).

Professional development plans submitted by LEAs must be carefully planned, ongoing, and systematic, and must include the three phases of initiation, implementation, and sustainability. This three-tiered model will become a blueprint for all Reading First schools, and will eventually become a plan for all New Jersey schools. LEAs will be required to develop a three-year activity plan of ongoing professional development that is fully aligned to the five essentials of reading instruction. These plans should reflect how high quality professional development experiences based on scientific research will lead to informed classroom, school, and district decision-making. Delivery mechanisms should include the use of coaches and other teachers of reading to provide feedback as instructional practices are put into classroom practice. Plans must clearly describe how the Reading Coach will be utilized in the school/classroom and the coach's role in district professional development plans.

LEAs must submit quarterly reports to the New Jersey Department of Education. Local Reading First coordinators are required to maintain an organized system of data collection and reporting to Chief School Administrators and state personnel regarding all professional development activities. Districts will be visited by regional offices and the Reading First staff of the New Jersey Department of Education to ensure that high quality professional development is occurring as planned.

The LEA plan must describe how professional development providers will be of high quality and knowledgeable in scientifically based reading research in order to deliver high quality training at the local level. Professional development plans should also describe how a seamless integration of state, regional, and local level professional development activities will ensure classroom change that is grounded in SBRR and the essential components of reading. LEAs must provide a detailed timeline of activities and an assurance that Reading First leaders, teachers, and others involved in Reading First activities, will be given the necessary professional development days/time, resources, and support needed. The plan must include adequate time for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned.

As an important component of professional development and career growth, the state will require LEAs to provide opportunities for collective participation (e.g., learning from other teachers at same grade level) and active learning (e.g., study groups, action research, journal writing and self-reflection). The plan should describe how kindergarten through grade three and special education teachers of kindergarten through grade twelve will be prepared in the essential components of reading instruction, and how to use and implement various components of their selected reading program.

According to the National Research Council's Report, "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children" (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998), critical components of the career-long development of excellent teachers should include ongoing support from colleagues and specialists. "Professional development should not be conceived as something that ends with graduation from a teacher preparation program, nor as something that happens primarily in graduate classrooms or even during in-service activities." What teachers know and can do makes a crucial difference in what children learn. Teachers need the knowledge and skills to create the kinds of curricula and instructional programs needed to meet new student learning expectations as articulated in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and statewide assessment system.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires a concerted effort by state and local education agencies to ensure that effective and comprehensive approaches to beginning reading instruction are established in order to build local capacity to provide, improve, and expand services to children.

Enhancing teachers' knowledge of the key components of research-based reading instruction will result in improved ability to analyze the needs of children in classrooms and schools, assess the strengths and weaknesses of programs, and target programs based on the individual needs of children. The New Jersey Reading First program emphasizes that reading programs are only successful when informed by outstanding teacher knowledge of the research on beginning reading instruction and how this knowledge translates to practice.

"Adult learners, like children, need to inquire, reflect, and respond to new ideas if they are to embrace them" (Bransford, Brown, Cocking, 1999). For a teacher to learn something new and to transfer it effectively into the classroom, certain steps must be operational. The teacher must understand the theory and rationale for the new content or instructional strategy. In addition, the teacher must have seen a model in action in order to truly conceptualize the process.

Research from The National Reading Panel (2000) shows that professional development is the most important element in systemic reform, with greater impact on student achievement than factors such as smaller class size or smaller schools. The panel stated, "Student achievement outcomes can be improved as a result of teacher development." (p.5-14). According to Judith Little (University of California, 1993), the most promising forms of professional development engage teachers in the pursuit of genuine questions, problems and curiosities over time, in ways that leave a mark on perspectives, policies, and practices. The new paradigm of professional development embraces a view of teachers not only as classroom experts but also as productive, responsible members of a broader professional community.

The intent of professional development is to continuously improve the performance of teachers, administrators, and other professional staff by providing them with a variety of rich and meaningful learning experiences that are based on students' needs, how best to educate students who face many educational disadvantages and teachers' needs. It must be an ongoing and sustained approach to the professional growth of teachers and administrators. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1998), "No other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable skillful teacher can make in the learning process. Teacher expertise is one of the most important factors in determining student achievement, followed by smaller class size and smaller schools."

In a report published by the National Commission on Teaching for America's Future entitled What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future (1998), the commission concluded that professional development is the most vital aspect of systemic reform. However, there has to be equal attention to what actually constitutes high quality professional development. Experts in the field believe that we must shift our thinking about what is meant by professional development.

To be effective, research shows that professional development must be sustained over time (NCEE, 1994). Educators need time to learn new practices and reflect on and evaluate them over time. For instance, if a teacher has been trained by an outside consultant in early intervention strategies, it is important that the teacher be given sufficient time to practice implementing the strategies and make adjustments to classroom instruction. These same teachers should have sufficient time to meet with the consultant and other teachers who are implementing the same strategies, in order to mentor, coach and validate their classroom experiences.

Informal opportunities such as collaboration and peer coaching are two powerful methods of putting new ideas into practice. Current research is clear that job-embedded opportunities in which teachers play an active role in their own professional growth are an important aspect of effective professional development. Professional development today is not merely viewed as formal training opportunities. Along with coursework, summer institutes and workshops, there is a myriad of job-embedded opportunities including modeling, mentoring, peer coaching, action research, study groups, and portfolio development.

New Jersey's Reading First program acknowledges the importance of scientifically based reading research and its impact on professional development for school personnel. There is also a commitment to provide the variety of professional development activities that will offer teachers reflective practice, time, ownership, theorized practice, collaboration, administrative support, and school and community partnerships (NCEE, 1994). We strongly believe that these elements are critical to the success of teacher improvement leading to greater student achievement.

Therefore, selected Reading First LEAs must demonstrate that they will:

- Have a clear plan with explicit means for assessing the specific professional development needs of their teachers and designing professional development around those specific needs;
- Have a clear, explicit process for the delivery of professional development to K-3 teachers and K-12 special education teachers;
- Implement intensive and focused professional development in: (i) the essential components of reading instruction; (ii) the implementation of scientifically based instructional materials, programs, and strategies; and (iii) the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments using a variety of delivery methods;
- Implement intensive and focused professional development in the area of effective reading strategies for students eligible for ESL/ bilingual and special education services;
- Engage in and support professional development that provides both initial preparation and ongoing support in implementing new strategies and programs;



- Offer a varied and full range of professional development experiences that are intensive, focused, and of sufficient duration to achieve the purposes and goals of the training;
- Give teachers adequate time for learning and implementing scientifically based reading instruction, including time for study, observation, practice, application, and evaluation;
- Provide targeted professional development for teachers who need additional assistance with skills and strategies related to improving reading instruction;
- Use individuals highly knowledgeable of scientifically based reading instruction and experienced in program implementation to provide professional development;
- Provide ongoing development and support to those serving as trainers and coaches;
- Offer professional development in state reading standards and assessments; and
- Coordinate local professional development with SEA activities related to improving reading achievement.

#### **1. D.7. District Based Technical Assistance**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the technical assistance LEAs will provide to participating schools relating to the implementation of Reading First?*

The LEA, along with each school's Literacy Team, will have day-to-day responsibility for on-going technical assistance. LEA staff will work with SEA Reading First staff to develop a quality program of technical assistance, designed to meet the particular needs of the teachers and students in individual schools or district. In order to provide high quality technical assistance to participating schools, LEAs, as part of their application will:

- Describe a methodology to assess local professional development needs (e.g., survey);
- Outline goals and benchmarks for the LEA professional development plan;
- Outline the LEA professional development budget and create standardized budget forms and procedures for participating district schools;
- Create standardized forms that will be used by each funded school to record professional development activities such as needs, goals, and benchmarks;
- Assist funded schools to evaluate their Reading First programs to ensure the high quality implementation of all program components and fidelity to scientifically based reading research;
- Assist funded schools with data collection and analysis to guide classroom instruction; and

- Provide generalized technical assistance to funded schools through on-site visits and the use of technology (e.g. list serv, on-line courses)

The state will evaluate the LEAs ability to provide high quality technical assistance through such measures as site visits, interviews, submission of quarterly status reports, and regular meetings with subgrantees. The NJDOE will develop a checklist of standards for district -based technical assistance that will be used to score and evaluate the quality of technical assistance provided by districts.

The New Jersey Department of Education will ensure that selected LEA plans provide high quality assistance related to the implementation of Reading First through a single systematic approach that requires LEAs to:

1. Coordinate technical assistance with the state Department of Education and other outside experts to provide quality assistance to Reading First schools;
2. Identify key individuals responsible for technical assistance in the areas of professional development needs of individual schools, setting goals and benchmarks, and budgeting to schools;
3. Provide a detailed plan for coordinating activities with the Department of Education, Regional training centers, higher education partners, and other experts to provide technical assistance;
4. Provide a detailed plan for assisting schools in evaluating their Reading First programs.

#### **1. D.8. Evaluation Strategies**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the methods LEAs will use to assess the effectiveness of Reading First activities for the district as well as for individual participating schools? How will the subgrant selection process evaluate LEAs plans for using this outcome information to make decisions about continuation funding for participating schools?*

Assessing the effectiveness of the New Jersey Reading First Program is crucial in gauging positive long-term effects in student reading achievement. Therefore, eligible LEAs will develop, with technical support from the New Jersey Department of Education, a clear evaluation plan, including a specific description of the valid and reliable measures that will be used to document the effectiveness of local Reading First activities for both individual schools and the LEA. These plans will be developed during state-administered technical assistance workshops and content specialists will provide hands-on assistance to small groups of LEAs. The state will assess the quality of these evaluation plans using the following criteria: completeness of evaluation strategies to assess effectiveness of Reading First activities for individual schools and the district as a whole; mechanism for collection and reporting of data in a timely manner; plan for coordinating efforts with external evaluator and Department of Education; plan for how evaluation data will be used for decision making; and description of process for summarizing data and reporting information to state and national staff.

In addition to the above-mentioned criteria, the NJ Department of Education will look to determine whether selected strategies and programs identified by LEAs meet the requirements of an effective reading program. An effective reading program is one that coherently integrates:

1. Dynamic instructional leadership (at the school and district levels);

2. Instructional strategies, programs, and aligned materials that include explicit instruction in the five essentials of reading instruction;
3. An aligned, high quality professional development plan;
4. Screening, diagnostic, and classroom–based assessments that are valid and reliable and used to inform instruction.

The department recommends that the district/school level Reading First Coordinator be responsible for Reading First evaluation; however, an existing district-based testing coordinator/administrator may be assigned those responsibilities. The LEA must provide an assurance that reading achievement data will be provided as requested, to both the SEA and to a selected outside agency responsible for state evaluation. Disaggregated data must be made available, including data representing income, ethnicity, native language, and eligibility for special education services under IDEA. The LEA must also describe how program decisions will be based on evaluation outcomes, including interventions with and/or continuation of schools not making significant progress.

The New Jersey Department of Education will work with an independent agency to train designated school/district personnel (e.g. School Literacy Team members) in test administration and the analysis and reporting of test data. The Reading First Coordinator of each school will receive extensive training at a three-day seminar focusing on data driven decision-making and progress assessment. The Reading First Coordinator will be trained as an expert test trainer and will be responsible for providing turnkey training to K-3 teachers in his/her respective school(s). The Reading First Coordinator must complete and submit surveys and questionnaires to the SEA and the external evaluator.

As part of the evaluation process, LEAs will be subject to on site visits by the department Reading First staff and the state’s external evaluator. In addition, the state evaluation will involve both experimental and control groups administering screenings, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments. In addition, all funded LEAs/schools must agree to participate in national evaluations as required by the United States Department of Education as part of Reading First accountability.

As a part of the local evaluation plan, Reading First LEAs must:

- Provide the SEA with data from progress monitoring and school post-test information;
- Develop a progress monitoring timeline;
- Identify a Reading First Coordinator who will serve as a school assessment coordinator and facilitate progress monitoring, and assessment training and implementation;
- Organize a building level Reading First assessment team, and facilitate the team’s participation in progress monitoring and assessment training;
- Develop a timeline for training sessions in assessment and assessment administration procedures;

- Use valid and reliable measures to report disaggregated reading achievement data for K-3 students;
- Describe how individual schools will be evaluated to determine continued participation, and describe interventions that will occur before discontinuing a school not making adequate progress;
- Complete periodic surveys required by the NJDOE to address specific Reading First Program implementation questions;
- Agree to participate in site visits from the NJDOE, members of the Reading First Leadership Team, the Governor's Early Literacy Task Force or other groups as designated by the NJDOE, to monitor the progress of the LEA Reading First program; and
- Agree to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

#### **1. D. 9. Access to Print Materials**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate the programs and strategies LEAs and schools will use to provide student access to engaging reading materials?*

Eligible LEAs will promote reading and library programs that provide student access to a wide array of engaging reading materials, including both expository and narrative texts. According to *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read* (National Institute for Literacy, 2001, p.27), fluency develops as a result of many opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success. Therefore, students should practice orally and silently rereading text that is reasonably easy for them. They should have access to many books containing mostly words they know or can decode easily. Reading First classrooms must provide print-rich environments that contain high-quality reading materials. In order to extend recreational reading opportunities for all students, LEAs will be encouraged to partner with public libraries and other literacy groups such as: the New Jersey Reading Association, the Kindergarten Association, Parent Teacher Associations, New Jersey Education Association, Children's Literacy Institute, and Classics for Kids, a national motivational reading program.

Eligible LEAs must incorporate the following literacy components into their instructional classroom designs to ensure support for scientifically based reading programs and include a description in their application. Reading First schools should have:

- Classroom libraries and lending libraries (in order for students to take books home), containing texts of various genres, fiction and nonfiction texts, expository and narrative texts;
- Sufficient books for every child (e.g., five or more books recommended per student) to support independent reading and print materials (e.g., magazines, newspapers);
- School libraries that are linked with Reading First efforts and provide high-quality children's literature (e.g., Newberry Awards, Caldecott Awards); and

- Technology-assisted resources including educational reading and writing software (e.g., Leapfrog Program for young children); internet-based classroom resources (e.g., PBS Teacher Source); audio and visual tapes; and educational television programs (e.g., Read Between the Lions) aligned with scientifically based reading research.

If possible, classroom assistants (volunteers, aides, or parents) should be utilized for reading support and available to help classroom teachers with motivational reading programs. These volunteers should not be delivering instructional programs in the school; rather, they should serve as a means of extending learning opportunities.

Technology-assisted resources enable teachers to enhance a student's reading experiences as well as support instructional needs. Teachers should review educational software to determine if materials and programs support scientifically based reading research. The SEA will also provide a list of recommended programs that support Reading First goals.

#### **1. D. 10. Additional Criteria**

*How will the subgrant selection process evaluate any additional uses of funds by LEAs and schools? What, if any, additional criteria will the SEA use in its subgrant selection process?*

Reading First school districts may find that in order to deliver a high quality, effective scientifically based reading program, there will have to be coordination among the uses of state and federal expenses. Eligible LEAs should explain in detail in their application any additional activities and/or uses of Reading First funds. The state will carefully evaluate the appropriateness of all activities and uses of Reading First funds to ensure alignment to the five essential components of effective reading instruction and the overall Reading First state plan.

All uses of funds are based on scientifically based reading research and are coordinated with the Reading First program. The budget, budget narrative, and answers to the following questions detail any additional uses of funds.

1. Describe any other activities that are based on SBRR and that strengthen the LEA grant proposal (e.g., protected time for reading).
2. Complete the budget and activities found in the NGO and detail any other uses of local Reading First funds.
  - a. Describe how funds will be used.
  - b. Describe how activities will be based on SBRR.
  - c. Describe how activities are aligned with other Reading First activities.

#### **1. D. 11. Competitive Priorities**

*How will the subgrant selection process apply the required competitive priority? What if any competitive priorities will the SEA use in its subgrant selection process?*

Competitive priority will be given to districts that:

- Are low performing, high poverty districts;
- Choose to implement a common core reading program across all Reading First schools in the district;

- Show strong district-level leadership with a focus on student achievement and school accountability;
- Have a comprehensive professional development model in place that is scientifically-based and linked to higher education; and/or
- Allocate specific district funding to early intervention programs, including those held before and after school, on weekends, and during the summer, to those students most at-risk for reading failure.

## **PROCESS FOR AWARDING SUBGRANTS**

*What process will the SEA use to award Reading First subgrants to eligible LEAs, including the number and size of anticipated subgrants, a timeline for the subgrant process, and a description of the review process? How will the SEA disseminate information about the reading First program and the SEAs subgrant process to eligible LEAs?*

Once the New Jersey Department of Education receives notification of funding under Reading First (early July 2002), the department will provide information, including application requirements, to all eligible local education agencies. A grant announcement will be sent from the department to the chief school administrators of the eligible districts (approximately 147 eligible LEAs) and will be posted on the department's website, including the NJPEP website. The state's definition of scientifically based reading research, along with the district level criteria for eligibility, will also be posted on the Department of Education's web site. The state will fund programs in all regions of the state, particularly urban and rural populations. The state will fund approximately 35 Reading First subgrantees, with a minimal award of \$140,000 and a maximum award of approximately \$1.6 million (considering the state's largest LEA and the number of eligible schools within that district). The percentage the state awards to an eligible district will not be less than the percentage that the LEA received of the total Title I Part A funds received by all LEAs in New Jersey for the preceding fiscal year. The SEA's goal is to ensure only those high quality subgrants of sufficient size and scope to successfully implement all Reading First activities be awarded funding. Once New Jersey has determined the minimum amount that an LEA can receive as described above, it will ensure that Reading First subgrants are of sufficient size and scope to enable eligible LEAs to fully implement programs to improve reading instruction.

Technical assistance and information sessions will be held in August 2002. Applications for funding must be submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education by October 1, 2002. Subgrantees will be notified of funding by November 15, 2002.

The New Jersey Department of Education, in consultation with the Reading First Leadership Team, will establish an expert panel to review the LEA applications. This panel will be composed of individuals who understand scientifically based reading research and the five components of reading, and who represent the diversity of the state. Prior to reviewing LEA applications, all members of the expert review panel will receive training on the goals of Reading First and the Reading First state plan, as well as the criteria for subgrant selection. At least two reviewers and a fiscal expert will read each application. Reviewers will use the criteria established by the SEA and outlined in the NGO. Upon completion of the review process, applicants will be formally notified of their awards.

## **1.F. STATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

*What is the SEA's plan for professional development related to the Reading First program? How will teachers statewide receive professional development in the essential components of reading instruction, using scientifically based instructional strategies, programs, and materials, and using screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments?*

The New Jersey Department of Education proposes to implement a comprehensive professional development plan in K-3 that is rooted in scientifically based reading research. The Reading First program will focus on varied, high quality, intensive, focused, and sustained professional development experiences for K-3 teachers and other school staff in Reading First schools. It coordinates the dissemination of information on scientifically based instructional strategies, programs, and materials and provides instruction in the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments.

Research from the National Reading Panel (2000) shows that professional development is the most important element in systemic reform. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1998), "No other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable skillful teacher can make in the learning process. Teacher expertise is one of the most important factors in determining student achievement." Additionally, the NRP stated, "Student achievement outcomes can be improved as a result of teacher development" (p.5-14). The Reading First professional development plan is grounded in the belief that in order for students to read independently and well by the end of third grade, educators must be dedicated to a continuous plan for professional development that begins with their pre-service activities, that continues with their induction into the profession, and that extends throughout their professional careers through on-going and sustained professional development endeavors.

The intent of this professional development plan is to continuously improve the performance of teachers, administrators, supervisors, and other professional staff responsible for student achievement. This can be accomplished by providing them with adequate time for study, observation, practice, application, and evaluation--all key components of high quality professional development. Opportunities will not be limited to coursework, institutes, and workshops. Job-embedded opportunities, such as modeling, mentoring, action research, and study groups will also play a major role in building the capacity of teachers, administrators, and other professional staff as they begin enhancing instructional practices and closing the achievement gap. Additionally, informal opportunities, such as collaboration and peer coaching, are two powerful methods of putting new ideas into practice.

New Jersey's Reading First professional development initiative is a six-year plan that incorporates an Initiation Phase (year 1), an Implementation Phase (years 2 and 3), and a Sustaining and Replicating Phase (years 4-6). Each phase includes state professional endeavors, regional professional development programs, as well as school district sponsorship and commitment. These collaborative efforts will ensure that effective and comprehensive approaches to reading instruction are established to provide, improve, and expand high quality reading instruction for all of New Jersey's children.

A three-pronged scaffolding approach to professional development will be implemented through statewide, regional, and school/district level training. Each level of training will build on a common foundation in reading research and effective classroom practices. State-level training will be designed and delivered by the SEA Reading First staff, in consultation with experts in scientifically based reading research and effective practice. State and regional coordinators, along with members of the Early Literacy Task Force, will develop training modules that address the components of an effective reading program (e.g. phonemic awareness, fluency). Additional modules will focus on the various forms of assessment and how to use assessment data maximize instruction. Other modules will focus on increasing parental involvement, motivating students to read, and addressing the needs of special populations, such as student with limited English



proficiency or students with learning disabilities. A multimedia approach (e.g. text, video, CD-ROM) will ensure training fidelity and facilitate the initiation of new Reading First staff over the lifetime of the program.

Regional training programs have been planned by the Reading First staff, and workshops will be facilitated by the regional Reading First coordinators, along with literacy specialists from local colleges and universities. Regional training will address issues relevant to the LEAs and schools in a particular area of the state. For example, in an area with a large limited English speaking population, regional training will provide additional focus on the special needs of those students and ways to improve reading achievement. The regional sessions will reinforce the state-delivered training and expand on the concepts by facilitating a hands-on approach. Participants in these sessions will have opportunities to practice new skills and get feedback, observe peers who model best practice and interpret data. Participants will upgrade their ability to use technology to record and analyze data and will learn new ways to incorporate technology into instructional practice.

Finally, training at the district and school level will involve all participating members of the School Literacy Team (principal, reading coach, Reading First coordinator), along with K-3 classroom teachers, K-12 special education teachers, and other appropriate school staff. Training may be delivered at the district or individual school building level, or through a partnership with higher education and their respective university sites. Sessions will focus on group study, mentoring, and networking along with leadership, team planning, and horizontal and vertical articulation. Local training may be provided by district or school building staff or may involve SEA Reading First staff, higher education partners, or knowledgeable outside consultants.

As a guide to districts and schools, the SEA will make available a list of high quality professional development providers in scientifically based literacy practices and in the use of data to drive decision-making. The state approved list will include providers with expertise in one or more of the five scientifically based research components of reading, the use of data to inform decision-making, and the inclusion and benefits of parent/family involvement in schools. Providers of local training will include SEA Reading First staff, higher education partners, or outside consultants. In addition, professional development may be provided by district or school building staff, who will be able to take advantage of the following SEA resources: (a) School Review and Improvement team members who currently work directly with schools and districts in school improvement planning, and (b) literacy coaches who will serve as advisors to subgrantees in many areas, including planning professional development opportunities.

As a further means to build local level capacity, districts and schools will be provided guidance standards as local level professional development activities are developed. All professional development practices must be aligned with rigorous, scientifically based research. Professional development providers are expected to

- demonstrate expertise in one or more of the five research-based components of reading;
- promote an integrated literacy curriculum; and
- be experienced in program implementation in high poverty, low performing schools and districts.

In addition, professional development providers in data analysis must be experienced in building capacity in schools/LEAs aimed at using data analysis procedures for multiple purposes: (1) to

identify gaps or problems in the instructional program and in school operations; (2) to inform professional development needs; (3) to identify groups and individual students who are struggling with reading; and (4) to identify root causes of low student achievement.

Equally important as high quality professional development providers is the assurance that professional development activities meet high standards. In an effort to standardize all professional development activities, the New Jersey Department of Education has developed criteria to monitor the quality of professional development activities at the local level. The criteria include, but are not limited to the following characteristics:

- Professional development activities must demonstrate a scientific base for the training program, compatible with the National Reading Panel's research findings;
- Professional development activities will focus on the conditions for improving student learning;
- Professional development activities must assure that curriculum and instruction design are compatible with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards;
- Professional development activities are to be related to school goals and objectives and to district mission and goals;
- Professional development activities require administrative participation, support, and follow-up;
- Professional development activities must encourage educators to collaborate in planning their own professional learning;
- Professional development activities must address the needs of all students including special education and LEP/bilingual students; and
- Professional development activities must foster active, investigative, reflective practitioners.

Follow-up and technical support will be provided at all three phases of professional development through various means, including the NJPEP which provides online discussion groups, professional resources, and a help desk (all schools have access to this virtual academy site). In addition, the Office of Program Planning and Design provides onsite technical assistance to most of the 35 districts in the form of School Review and Improvement Team members, including program and fiscal staff. Finally, Reading First staff and outside consultants, including higher education partners and members of the Higher Education Council, will provide technical support throughout the duration of the grant.

A Reading First training module that incorporates curricula at grades K-3 will be developed by the NJ PEP professional staff. This training module will be utilized at the regional training sites to deliver uniform high-quality, scientific-based professional development in the five essentials of effective reading instruction.

The New Jersey Department of Education is cognizant of the need to not place too much emphasis on technology in the professional development plan. The purpose of technology training, as it pertains to Reading First, is to prepare teachers to effectively analyze and evaluate data to drive instruction. The comprehensive data system builds on the components of scientific research and supports teacher empowerment to make sound decisions based on scientific methods of data collection and analysis. Training for teachers will enable them to collect multiple measures of student performance and report this information in a consistent, organized

manner to district personnel and Department of Education staff. Several divisions within the Department of Education will work jointly to coordinate these efforts and provide resources and support services for this initiative, particularly the Offices of Program Planning and Design, and Title I.

### **Teacher Education at Public Institutions of Higher Education**

The NJ Department of Education has contacted a number of institutions of higher education and invited them to participate on the *Higher Education Council* for Reading First. A primary goal of this Council is to strengthen teacher preparation at these institutions and others across the state. The following institutions have agreed to collaborate on New Jersey's Reading First initiative and provide an assurance that they are prepared to support scientific-based reading research:

- Rutgers Graduate School of Education, New Brunswick
- The College of New Jersey, Trenton
- Kean University, Union
- Rowan University, Glassboro
- New Jersey City University, Jersey City
- Montclair University, Montclair

In addition, a State Leadership Team will be actively participating in the Harvard Graduate School of Education for Statewide Literacy Initiatives, August 18-22, 2002. New Jersey's proposal was accepted, along with only four other states, and a select panel of 12-15 expert state educators will attend this summer institute. Participation at the Harvard Summer Institute will enable the state team to develop a systematic plan for ensuring high standards in preservice and inservice requirements aligned to scientifically based reading research and the goals of Reading First. The Department of Education has planned a retreat (July 16, 2002) for all participants to prepare a state presentation at this conference.

### **Phase I: Initiation**

During the first year, Reading First staff in funded districts and schools will participate in intensive training sessions that will lay the foundation for the systemic change that is to occur. Planned professional development experiences at the state, regional, and local level will focus on teachers and other school staff acquiring a solid understanding of the principles of scientifically based reading research and effective practice. To foster student achievement, participants need to develop an understanding of the various forms of reading assessments (e.g. diagnostic, outcome) and how to use them to maximize student achievement. The use of data driven decision-making is key to the success of Reading First. Teachers need to learn how to develop and analyze a needs assessment and how to use the data derived from the assessment to develop and implement an action plan. Finally, teachers and other school staff from Reading First schools need to develop and refine their leadership skills in order to become effective coaches and mentors.

Phase I: Initiation focuses on moving everyone to the same page—that is, ensuring that all Reading First participants have a common framework from which to operate. It is important that classroom teachers and administrators speak the same language about reading instruction. The modules developed for Phase I will provide staff in Reading First schools with intensive training,

over time, that can be replicated and reinforced at the regional and local levels. Sample content from the modules is outlined below.

**Phonemic Awareness: Increasing knowledge of:**

- The speech sounds in English and the pronunciation of phonemes for instruction;
- The progression of development of phonological skill;
- The difference between speech sounds and the letters that represent them;
- The casual links between early decoding, spelling, word knowledge, and phoneme awareness; and,
- How critical the foundation skills are for later reading success.

**Phonemic Awareness: Enhancing skills in:**

- Selecting and using a range of activities representing the developmental progression of phonological skill
- Using various techniques for teaching phonemic awareness
- Having the ability to monitor every child's progress and identify and support those who are falling behind

**Phonemic Awareness: Providing opportunities to:**

- Practice phoneme matching, identification, segmentation, blending, substitution and deletion;
- Arrange phonological awareness activities by difficulty level and developmental sequence;
- Practice and analyze letter-sound matching activities;
- Observe and critique live or videotaped student-teacher interactions during phonemic awareness instruction; and,
- Discuss children's progress, using informal assessments, to obtain early help for those in need of it.

**Systematic Phonics Instruction: Increasing knowledge of:**

- Speech-to-print correspondence at the sound, syllable pattern and morphological levels;
- The developmental progression in which orthographic knowledge is generally acquired;
- How beginner texts are linguistically organized;
- The differences among approaches to teaching word attack; and,
- Why instruction in word attack should be active and interactive.

**Systematic Phonics Instruction: Enhancing skills in:**

- Choosing examples of words that illustrate sound-symbol, syllable, and morpheme patterns
- Selecting and delivering appropriate lessons according to students' levels of spelling, phonics, and word identification skills
- Explicitly teaching the sequential blending of individual sounds into a whole word

- Teaching active exploration of word structure with a variety of techniques
- Enabling students to use word attack strategies as they read connected text

**Systematic Phonics Instruction: Opportunities that allow for:**

- Practice various active techniques including sound blending, structural word analysis, word building, and word sorting
- Identify, on the basis of student reading, the appropriate level at which to instruct
- Observe, demonstrate, and practice error correction strategies
- Search for text examples of words that exemplify an orthographic concept; lead discussions about words
- Review beginner texts to discuss their varying uses in reading instruction

**Fluency Instruction: Increasing knowledge of:**

- How word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension are related to one another;
- Text features that are related to text difficulty; and,
- Which students should receive extra practice with fluency development and why.

**Fluency Instruction: Enhancing skills in:**

- Determining reasonable expectations for reading fluency at various stages of reading development, using research-based guidelines and appropriate state and local standards and benchmarks;
- Helping children select appropriate texts of sufficiently easy levels to promote ample independent as well as oral reading (zone of proximal development);
- Using techniques for increasing speed of word recognition; and,
- Using techniques for repeated readings of passages, such as alternate oral reading with a partner, reading with a tape, or rereading the same passage up to three times.

**Fluency Instruction: Opportunities that allow for:**

- Practice assessing and recording text-reading fluency of students in class;
- Organizing classroom library and other support materials by topic and text difficulty, coding for easy access by students, and tracking how much children are reading;
- Using informal assessment results to identify who needs to improve fluency;
- Devising a system for recording student progress toward reasonable goals; and,

- Conducting fluency-building activities with a mentor teacher.

**Vocabulary Instruction: Increasing knowledge of:**

- The role of vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge in comprehension;
- Selecting words for direct teaching before, during, and after reading;
- The role and characteristics of direct and contextual methods of vocabulary instruction;
- Reasonable goals and expectations for learners at various stages of reading development and appreciating the wide differences in students' vocabularies; and,
- Why books themselves are a good source for word learning.

**Vocabulary Instruction: Enhancing skills in:**

- Selecting material for reading aloud that will expand students' vocabulary;
- Selecting words for instruction before a passage is read;
- Teaching word meanings and exemplifying uses, associations to known words, and word relationships;
- Providing for repeated encounters with new words and multiple opportunities to use new words;
- Explicitly teaching how and when to use context to figure out word meanings; and,
- Helping children understand how word meanings apply to various contexts by talking about words they encounter in reading.

**Vocabulary Instruction: Opportunities that allow for:**

- Collaborating with a team to select best read-aloud books and to share rationales;
- Selecting words from text for direct teaching and giving a rationale for the choice;
- Devising exercises to involve students in constructing meanings of words, in developing example uses of words, in understanding relationships among words, and in using and noticing uses of words beyond the classroom;
- Devising activities to help children understand the various ways that context can give clues to meaning, including that often clues are very sparse and sometimes even misleading; and,
- Using a series of contexts to show how clues can accumulate.

**Explicit Comprehension Instruction: Increasing knowledge of:**

- The cognitive processes involved in comprehension and the techniques and strategies that are most effective, for what types of students, and with what content;
- The typical structure of common narrative and expository text genres;
- The characteristics of "reader friendly" text;

- Phrase, sentence, paragraph, and text characteristics of “book language” that students may misinterpret;
- Varying reading strategies based on purpose;
- The similarities and differences between written composition and text comprehension; and,
- The role of background knowledge in text comprehension.

**Explicit Comprehension Instruction: Enhancing skills in:**

- Helping children engage texts and consider ideas deeply;
- Choosing and implementing instruction appropriate for specific students and texts;
- Facilitating comprehension of academic language such as connecting words, figures of speech, idioms, humor, and embedded sentences;
- Communicating directly to children the value of reading for various purposes;
- Helping students use written responses and discussion to process meaning more fully; and,
- Previewing text and identifying the background experiences and concept that are important for comprehension of that text and that help students call on or acquire that knowledge.

**Explicit Comprehension Instruction: Opportunities that allow for:**

- Role-play and rehearsal of key research supported strategies, such as questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and using graphic organizers;
- Discussing and planning to teach characteristics of both narrative and expository texts;
- Considering student work and reading behavior to determine where miscomprehension occurred and plan to repair it;
- Interpreting the effectiveness of instruction with video and examples of student work;
- Practicing leading, scaffolding, and observing discussions in which students collaborate to form joint interpretations of text; and,
- Discussing and planning to teach ways of helping students call on or acquire relevant knowledge through defining concepts, presenting examples, and eliciting students’ reactions to the concepts in ways that assess their understanding (Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide, 2000).

In addition to the five essential components of literacy acquisition, the Learning First Alliance also stresses a professional development plan that includes using assessment to inform instruction. Topics that will be included in the training modules, but are not limited to:

**Assessment: Developing awareness of:**

- Assessments use for various purposes, including determining strengths and needs of students in order to plan for instruction and flexible grouping; monitoring of progress in relation to stages of

reading, spelling, and writing; assessing curriculum-specific learning; and using diagnostic tests appropriately for program placement;

- Programs of assessment that include validated tools for measuring important components of reading;
- The benchmarks and standards for performance; and,
- The importance of student self-assessment.

**Developing Teachers' assessment skills by:**

- Using efficient, informal, validated strategies for assessing each of the essential components of reading;
- Screening all children briefly; assessing children with reading and language weaknesses at regular intervals;
- Interpreting results for the purpose of helping children achieve the standards; and,
- Communicating assessment results to parents and students.

**Enhancing Teachers' assessment experiences through:**

- Participating in assessment role plays, after modeling and demonstration with surrogate subjects, and providing feedback until skills of administration and scoring are reliable;
- Administering assessments and reviewing the results with the School Literacy Team (SLT) for the purpose of enhancing programs and instructional strategies;
- Evaluating the outcomes of instruction and presenting the results to the School Literacy Team (SLT; and, )
- Developing or selecting record keeping tools for parents and students.

At the completion of phase I professional development, staff in each Reading First school will understand the research base and know how to apply it to improve classroom instruction. Teachers, administrators, and appropriate members of school teams will have received intensive, hands-on training in the use of data to inform instruction in reading. It is expected that over time school leaders will recognize the value of using these same processes to drive continuous school improvement efforts across all grades for all students, including students receiving special education and bilingual/LEP services. The chart that follows summarizes Phase I: Initiation of New Jersey's **Reading First** professional development plan.



<b>PHASE I: INITIATION JULY 1, 2002 TO JUNE 30, 2003</b> (State, Regional, and Local Professional Development)			
<b>7/1/02 to 11/02: Orientation of new SEA staff; Development of training modules; Grant applications reviewed and funding awarded; SEA staff assigned to work with specific LEAs/schools;</b>			
<b>DATES</b>	<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
12/02 State	Reading First SEA staff	School Literacy Teams from funded Reading First schools LEA leadership staff	Overview of Reading First program requirements
12/02 – 6/03 (Multiple sessions of varying duration delivered as modules) State	Reading First SEA staff Consultants	K-3 teachers in Reading First schools School Literacy Teams Reading coaches LEA leadership staff Designated SEA staff (e.g. School improvement, Title I)	Overview of requirements Formal instruction in SBRR and each essential component of reading instruction Formal and informal assessments Data driven decision making to maximize instruction Aligning research based instruction with standards
1/03 – 6/03 State	Reading First SEA staff Consultants Higher education partners	Reading Coaches	Coaching and mentoring strategies Observations, record keeping, and fostering relationships with administration and staff
2/03 – 6/03 State	Reading First SEA staff Consultants Higher education partners	K-12 special education teachers K-3 LEP/Bilingual teachers Reading coaches LEA special services staff	Teaching reading for students with special learning needs SBRR Data driven instruction
4/03 – 6/03 State	Reading First SEA staff Technology consultants	LEA staff responsible for data collection and reporting LEA leadership staff	Using software applications to collect and analyze data Reporting requirements

<b>PHASE I: INITIATION (cont)</b>			
<b>DATES</b>	<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
12/02 – 6/03      Regional	Regional SEA Reading First staff Higher ed partners Designated SEA staff assigned to LEAs (e.g. school improvement staff) Vendors (e.g. software, materials)	K-3 teachers in Reading First schools School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches LEA leadership staff	Regional networks: Review and reinforce state level training Specialized issues within regions Practice, feedback and review Collaborative support and sharing Resources and materials Improving leadership skills Hands on technology and data analysis
12/02 – 6/03      Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners Consultants	K-3 Reading First teachers	Review and reinforce state and regional training Coaching, mentoring, observation and practice Modeling and feedback Group study On-line study and discussion groups Cross grade articulation Curriculum alignment with standards
2/03 – 6/03      Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners Consultants	K-12 special education teachers K-3 LEP/Bilingual teachers LEA special services staff	Specific strategies to address special learning needs Using assessment data with special needs populations
2/03 – 6/03      Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners K-3 teachers	K-3 teachers of art, music, health, physical education, etc. Paraprofessionals Educational support staff (e.g. counselor, nurse, social worker)	Overview of SBRR and essential components Strategies to teach reading in content areas and support classroom instruction Gaining parental support

## **Phase II: Program Implementation**

As program implementation begins, districts, schools, and teachers will continue to receive essential information, program resources, and contextual supports to effectively instruct students in early literacy acquisition. In order for teachers to learn new behaviors and effectively transfer those skills to the classroom, several steps are involved. Teachers need opportunities to:

- Understand the theory and rationale for new content and instruction;
- Observe models in action;
- Practice new behaviors in a safe environment; and,
- Try out the new behavior in the classroom with peer support.

(Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide, 2000)

The second and third years of professional development focus on providing teachers with the specific kinds of opportunities that have been proven to foster professional growth. In addition, professional development opportunities will address specific issues that have arisen in the early stages of implementation and will engage other school staff (e.g. paraprofessionals, art/music and other special subject teachers) in discussions of ways they can support early literacy development.

Phase II will focus on increasing teacher background knowledge in scientifically based reading research. Building on the foundation established in year one, teachers will learn new strategies to implement research-based practices into daily instruction. As K-3 classroom teachers implement screening, diagnostic, and outcome assessments in their classrooms, they will learn ways to analyze and use the data to improve instruction. The focus of this phase is to help teachers to integrate the knowledge and skills learned so that they become informed decision makers. Teachers will have ample opportunities to practice these skills, with the help and support of NJDOE Reading First staff as well as reading coaches, higher education partners, and consultants. The goal is to enable and empower teachers to focus with more precision and accuracy on root causes and implement appropriate interventions for children who are struggling with reading.

Phase II will focus on the needs of teachers through both regional and local venues. Regional networks of school clusters in close proximity will be formed to address specific issues and needs. Networks will permit more personalized interaction with the regional NJDOE staff assigned to the LEA/school. While consultants may be used for specific elements of professional development, most of the training will continue to be delivered through the use of modules specifically designed for New Jersey's Reading First program. In this way, important content can be delivered to all schools with fidelity, while allowing for the addition of new staff during ensuing years of the grant.

Phase II will also allow teachers and other school staff to practice using technology. Three kinds of technology play an important role in this process. First, teachers need to understand how to use technology to inform classroom practice. For example, this may involve the use of assessment software that contributes to the data driven decision-making process. It may also include the use of Palm Pilots and other classroom aids that allow teachers to record and download data quickly. Secondly, teachers need practice using the latest instructional software

and tools to support reading instruction. Finally, teachers need practice using electronic communication, such as email and list serves as well as online courses such as those that can be found on NJPEP.

At the local level, reading coaches and members of the school Literacy team will play an important role in providing mentoring, coaching, and peer support. Teachers can form study groups, observe best practices in other classrooms, and refine the curriculum to align with the New Jersey Language Arts Literacy Standards. For example, monthly meetings can provide local support and allow for teachers to examine issues pertinent to their school or district. Local professional development opportunities may take place at the school or district level, depending on the issues and needs of the staff.

Each phase of professional development builds on the succeeding one. Booster sessions will continue to focus on SBRR and effective practice as well as data driven instruction. Phase II allows for hands on practice, peer support, practice, feedback, and expanding technological skills. It also opens the door for increased involvement and support from other teachers, educational services personnel, and parents and community members. The following chart outlines some of the activities planned for Phase II.

PHASE II: IMPLEMENTATION JULY 1, 2003 TO JUNE 30, 2005 (State, Regional, and Local Professional Development)			
DATES	PROVIDERS	AUDIENCE	CONTENT
7/03 – 6/05 State Level Event (5-day summer institute planned)	Reading First SEA staff Higher ed partners Consultants	School Literacy Teams from funded Reading First schools LEA leadership staff K-3 Reading First teachers LEA assessment staff Reading coaches	Progress reports and updates; showcase of best practices Review of new research (SBRR) Continued instruction in effective classroom strategies Case studies and practice sessions Assessment: using data to drive instruction
7/03 – 6/05  State/Regional	Reading First SEA staff Consultants Higher education partners	Advanced Reading Coach Training and Leadership	Advanced skill and leadership development; Advanced coaching and mentoring strategies; Classroom observations, record keeping, and fostering relationships with administration and staff; Working with K-12 special ed and K-3 LEP students
7/03-6/05  State/Regional	Reading First SEA staff Technology consultants	LEAs Reading First Literacy Teams	<u>School/District Reporting Requirements</u> Using software applications to collect and analyze data Reporting requirements—links to other funding streams Troubleshooting data collection Linking with other data sources Helping teachers use and analyze the data
7/03 – 6/05	Regional SEA Reading First staff Higher ed partners Designated SEA staff assigned to LEAs (e.g. school improvement staff)	K-3 teachers in Reading First schools School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches LEA leadership staff Parents	Regional networks-all areas covered in Phase I plus: Selecting and using library materials Motivating students to read Increasing parental involvement Gaining community support

Regional	Curriculum Vendors	Library Media specialists	
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<b>PHASE II: IMPLEMENTATION (cont)</b>			
<b>DATES</b>	<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
7/03 – 6/05  Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners Consultants	K-3 Reading First teachers	All areas covered in Phase I plus: School-based resources Community resources Training tutors Working with volunteers and paraprofessionals Family literacy programs
7/03 – 6/05  Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners Consultants	K-12 special education teachers K-3 LEP/Bilingual teachers LEA special services staff (e.g. learning consultant, social worker)	All areas covered in Phase I plus: Working with limited English speaking families Family Literacy initiatives Using assessment data to develop an IEP
7/03 – 6/05  Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners K-3 teachers	K-3 teachers of art, music, health, physical education, etc. Paraprofessionals Educational support staff (e.g. counselor, nurse, social worker)	All areas covered in Phase I plus: Cross content alignment Collaborative team approach to intervention and referral Using instructional technology effectively to incorporate reading and writing across the curriculum
7/03 – 6/05  Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners	K-3 classroom teachers	Collaborative teams and study groups Classroom observation, modeling, peer support, providing feedback, evaluation of current practices

### **Phase III: Sustaining and Replicating Reading Programs**

The purpose of Phase III is to support and expand the implementation of scientifically based reading practices that lead to improved student achievement. Professional development experiences will continue to build on the first two phases, both in theory and classroom practice. During this phase, “programs that work” will be showcased. Phase III of the model will include more about SBRR content since there will most likely be teachers during phase III who are not very familiar with SBRR and effective reading instruction. Additionally, there will be an emphasis on how to appropriately implement the three types of classroom assessments and how to use the data from the four types of assessments

Those schools that have experienced success during the first years of the grant will become more involved in the delivery of professional development. These schools will encourage site visits and classroom observations, as they will share their insights into the supports that need to be in place to ensure that quality, effective instruction occurs.

Teacher institutes, regional networks, and local study groups and meetings will continue to be an integral part of the professional development plan. In addition, non-reading first schools will be invited to attend appropriate sessions so that they too can benefit from scientifically based reading research. There will be a continued emphasis on the use of data driven instruction. By this time, LEAs and schools will have identified obstacles and supports for improved early literacy and will address them as part of regional and local sessions. In addition, Phase III will allow LEAs and schools to share best practices in real and meaningful ways, through classroom visitations and observations, electronic lesson planning, and collaborative teams. Regularly scheduled meetings, at the local and regional level, will allow participants to assess and discuss emerging needs and construct in-school support strategies.

Phase III will focus on issues that continue to impact early literacy in a particular district or area of the state. For example, LEAs and schools can explore ways to secure additional funding for after school and community based programs or they can focus on ways to involve parents and communities in reading activities. In addition, teachers and other school staff may examine the impact of family literacy programs on early literacy or may examine ways to meet the needs of limited English speaking families.

This phase will continue to expand the skills of teachers and other school staff to assess student achievement and to use the data to individualize and differentiate instruction. The use of technology will continue to be important as this stage.

The School Literacy Team, reading coaches, and higher education partners, will play important roles in this phase. The NJDOE regional coordinators will continue to develop and deliver training via modules specifically designed to meet the needs of Reading First schools. In addition, the modules can be used to expand professional development activities to all New Jersey K-3 teachers.

Phase III will showcase best practices and positive outcomes. Professional development experiences will be sustained and on-going and continue to build teacher confidence, knowledge, and skill. The matrix that follows summarizes key aspects of Phase III.

<b>PHASE III: SUSTAINING AND REPLICATING - JULY 1, 2005 TO JUNE 30, 2008</b> (State, Regional, and Local Professional Development)			
<b>DATES</b>	<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
6/06 6/07 6/08 Multi-day summer institutes held each year	Reading First SEA staff Selected Reading First Schools Higher ed partners Consultants Reading Coaches	Reading First LEAs/schools K-3 classroom teachers from non-funded LEAs School administrators Higher education/teacher preparation	Review of SBRR and effective reading instruction, particularly for those teachers less familiar with these practices. <i>What works--</i> Showcase of best practices Showcase of student achievement in selected Reading First schools Updates on research based practices, technology, new resources and materials Using reading coaches effectively Updates on required state assessments and state standards Appropriate implementation of classroom assessments: screening, diagnostic, performance-based assessments How to effectively use data from assessments
7/05 – 6/08 annual events  State/Regional	Reading First SEA staff Consultants Higher education partners	Reading Coaches	Effective practice Mentoring new coaches Defining the coaches' role in nonfunded schools
7/05 – 6/08 (monthly or as needed)  Regional	Regional SEA Reading First staff Higher ed partners Designated SEA staff assigned to LEAs (e.g. school improvement staff)	K-3 teachers in Reading First schools School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches LEA leadership staff Parents Library Media specialists	Regional networks focus on best practices, peer assistance, and updates on new laws and requirements Funding options for expanded programs Community outreach such as improving libraries, making reading materials accessible, starting after school and summer programs



<b>PHASE III: SUSTAINING AND REPLICATING (cont)</b>			
<b>DATES</b>	<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
7/05 – 6/08 Annual or more often as needed  Regional/Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners Consultants	K-3 Reading First teachers LEA leadership	Assessment strategies: Using assessment to individualize instruction—best practices Specific assessment issues such as new students, transient students, limited English speaking students, learning disabled students, etc.
7/05 – 6/08  Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners	K-3 classroom teachers Grade 4 teachers	Cross grade level articulation Aligning curriculum with best practices and research Sharing assessment data to inform practice Mentoring and peer support Modeling and feedback
7/05 – 6/08 (ongoing) Local	LEA Reading First staff School Literacy Teams Reading Coaches Higher ed partners	K-3 classroom teachers School/LEA leadership	Evaluation of program strengths and limitations (group and individual) Strategic planning for upcoming years Data analysis as part of planning

## **SECTION 2: STATE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **2.A. STATE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN**

*How will the SEA provide technical assistance to LEAs and schools participating in Reading First? How will the SEA monitor the progress of participating LEAs and schools?*

The NJDOE Reading First **regional coordinators** (9) will be hired and trained in scientific-based research methods and the five essentials of reading, and will be the first point of contact for Reading First schools. These regional coordinators, under the direction of the Reading First managerial staff, will be responsible for providing technical assistance and will serve as the primary professional development conduit for the LEAs/schools. Regional networks, lead by Reading First Directors and managers, will provide on-going and timely support to teachers and other staff. Regional office staff will be responsible for regular site visits and may request that other division staff periodically participate as part of this process. All required LEA reports must be submitted to the NJDOE, Trenton office.

All State Department of Education staff involved in the delivery of Reading First professional development, including high quality technical assistance, will be required to attend in-depth training sessions that address SBRR and the five essentials of reading instruction. Beginning in August 2002, intensive training workshops will be scheduled for Reading First NJ Department of Education staff, particularly the managers, directors, and content specialists working directly with the Reading First program. Participants will be identified and required to attend a one-week summer institute focusing on the goals and activities of Reading First, with a special focus on delivery of instruction in the five essential components of reading and research-based programs, assessments, and methods. Continuing education certificates, specifying completion of 30 clock hours of training in scientifically based reading research, will be awarded to all participants. This endorsement will qualify them as eligible Reading First Trainers and enable the Department of Education to expand its literacy efforts. Only those who have participated on the Reading First Interdepartmental Team for the Reading First grant, or other Reading First staff who hold a reading specialization, early literacy or preschool certification, or elementary certification can qualify to participate in this summer institute. Also, those teachers who hold the Governor's Reading Coaches positions are encouraged to participate in these training efforts.

Other resource department staff assigned to these same LEAs/schools (e.g. school improvement staff) will collaborate with the regional coordinators to maximize contact and services. While other state-level Reading First staff will be involved in professional development activities, technical assistance will be the primary responsibility of the regional coordinators who will call upon others (e.g. consultants, representatives from higher education) to deliver the needed intensive training related to the five essentials of reading instruction. The Reading First Director and Manager will provide leadership to the Reading First staff, and work with LEAs, state-level organizations, the Early Literacy Task force, the Reading First Higher Education Council, and Reading First Leadership Team to coordinate all state efforts and activities related to Reading First, including activities related to participation in the national assessment.

The state will identify and establish a list of professional development providers to deliver focused training related to scientifically based reading programs, assessments, and methods. These providers must possess the following qualifications:

- In-depth knowledge of scientifically based reading research and the five essentials of reading instruction;
- Knowledgeable of conceptual foundations – the reading process; must possess a solid knowledge regarding the theoretical and scientific underpinnings for understanding literacy development;
- Knowledgeable of the structure of language, including knowledge of the English speech sound system and its production, the structure of English orthography and its relation to sounds and meaning, and grammatical structure;
- Recent experience teaching primary grades K-3 for at least three years;
- Masters degree in reading or early literacy or a doctorate in education with experience working in early childhood;
- Experience working with district teacher professional development and delivering training in the components of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies;
- Participation in regional, state and/or national workshops/institutes;
- Knowledge and experience with implementing formal and informal early assessments;
- Understanding of national and state literacy initiatives;
- Knowledgeable of the newly revised state standards and the latest research cited in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998);
- Knowledgeable of state/federal literacy initiatives and the Governor’s early literacy efforts.

These high quality providers will be available for training at state, regional, and local levels. LEAs, in choosing providers other than state-approved, are required to use the same state – developed criteria for screening eligible providers.

### **LEA Organization to Ensure High Quality Implementation and Fidelity to Reading First**

Each LEA receiving Reading First funding will be required to create a school literacy team and a Steering Committee in each of its participating schools. Districts that are currently implementing whole school reform with school management teams in place may utilize the existing school team or form a subcommittee (as its Steering Committee) that focuses specifically on the goals of Reading First programs. The members of the Steering Committee will include but not be limited to: an administrator; classroom teachers in kindergarten through grade 3; a special education teacher; a parent from the targeted population; a community-based organization; a representative from the higher education partner; an ESL/bilingual teacher; a support/intervention teacher; a certified reading specialist; and, a library/media specialist. In Abbott schools, the SEA staff assigned to each school will serve as ex-officio members of the literacy teams. School literacy teams will participate in leadership and team- building training that will help them to coordinate and implement the goals of their grant proposal. School Literacy Teams will work jointly with School Steering Committees in the oversight and implementation of Reading First programs. The School Literacy Team will be the primary vehicle for school change, enabling teachers to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to improve instruction.

LEAs and schools must describe how they will assure flexible school and classroom scheduling that will allow staff, including the School Literacy Team, common planning time during the school day. In addition, the school must demonstrate that it has developed a focused plan that will allow teachers the necessary time outside the classroom for planning and participation in self-directed or district/school -sponsored professional development opportunities.

### **Identification of Scientifically Based Reading Programs, Professional Development Providers, and Instructional Assessments.**

In order to provide leadership and assist districts and schools, the New Jersey Department of Education has established a Reading First **Program Review Committee** to review vendor programs, assessments, educational materials (including computer software programs and data analysis programs) to determine if they meet the criteria for Reading First and are grounded in scientific-based reading research (see rubric on p. ). However, since New Jersey's home rule regulations give local districts much flexibility in selecting curricular programs, the state will allow LEAs to choose classroom-based and diagnostic measures, from a list of recommended programs, those that best meet the needs of their students in K-3. The criteria for creating lists of programs and assessments is outlined in other sections of the proposal (see Section I, Instructional Strategies and Programs, and Assessments).

Consistent with the state's continuing education requirements adopted in May 1998, the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB), comprised of teachers and practitioners, adopted a series of measures that will assist Reading First districts and schools with the delivery of high-quality professional development. As a result of the work of the PTSB, the State Board of Education adopted professional development standards, guidelines for district professional development programs, a quality assurance program for professional development opportunities offered by providers, and an online directory of professional development providers. For the purposes of Reading First, the department staff will provide a list of state-approved early literacy providers who are knowledgeable in SBRR and the five components of reading, and who meet the provider qualifications outlined in previous paragraphs.

State guidelines for district professional development require school districts to develop a yearly professional development plan. These guidelines assist districts with planning, assessing professional development needs, and evaluating the success of their plan. This also helps districts move their current professional development program into the new paradigm of job-embedded, collegial professional development. The regulations require that all district plans reflect the new standards developed by the PTSB and approved by the State Board of Education and the Commissioner. At the county level, a 15-member board composed of teachers, administrators, a higher education representative, school board members, and members of the public review and approve all district plans to assure that they are aligned with the state-level standards. For the purposes of Reading First, districts should have needs assessment plans already established for professional development. This plan will greatly assist eligible LEAs with the planning and coordination of their grant proposals, and specifically, district and school-level plans for Reading First.

Additionally, the Department of Education's Virtual Academy/NJPEP was created to provide high-quality, innovative web-based training and technical support for all teachers. Housed within the Division of Educational Programs and Assessment, NJPEP provides high-quality,

cost-effective technical assistance and professional development for all teachers using interactive television, teleconferencing, and the Internet. For the purposes of Reading First, these interactive technologies will allow educators to share resources, best practices, and scientifically based reading strategies. NJPEP will serve as a means to showcase Reading First “best practices” and “Read to Achieve” schools that demonstrate significant reading gains and school progress, as well as encourage replication and resource sharing. This innovative measure will enable Reading First teachers to participate in regular professional development activities without having to leave the workplace, in addition to the high quality training they will receive at the regional training sites.

## **2.B. BUILDING STATEWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE**

*How will the SEA use Reading First to build statewide commitment to improving K-3 reading instruction and raising K-3 reading achievement? What leadership at the SEA will be dedicated to Reading First? Has the State established a Reading Leadership Team?*

New Jersey has established a leadership structure that will ensure a consistent, comprehensive, coherent approach to literacy education. Governor McGreevey’s commitment to improving education has set the pace for top-down, bottom-up improvement. The Governor’s plan establishes benchmarks and provides leadership and financial resources to ensure success. New Jersey has a well-articulated vision, shared-decision making, and accountability measures to support this literacy initiative. The Governor’s Early Literacy Task Force will provide statewide leadership and direction regarding all literacy efforts. A critical linkage will be established between the Task Force and the Reading First Leadership Team (see Appendix C).

In New Jersey, 147 school districts are eligible to receive a total of 35 Reading First awards. Student scores on the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA), the test currently administered in fourth grade, have been used to identify schools that will be targeted for reading assistance activities. Currently, the performance bands on the ESPA, especially in the “partially proficient” category, are a predictable indicator of how students in the same schools are performing at grade three. Student performance on the ESPA will be used to determine schools that have had more than 15 percent of their students performing at the “partially proficient” level. These schools will be targeted for initial coaching efforts. The department will schedule required sessions for selected staff from these districts to work with reading coaches during late July/early August. SEA Reading First staff, as well as other appropriate SEA staff, will be included in these training efforts.

Schools that have between 10-15 percent of their students performing at the partially proficient level will not be included in the summer training sessions, but will receive assistance with the implementation of research-based best practices beginning in the fall of 2002. Schools with less than 10 percent of their students performing at the partially proficient level will have access to selected reading assistance activities, but will not be included in the initial round of reading coach programs.

The New Jersey Department of Education is undergoing a reorganization of its structure and services. The Reading First program will be housed in the Division of Educational Programs and Assessment under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner Richard Ten Eyck, Director Jay Doolan, and Early Literacy Director Ann Lawrence. The Reading First program will be part of the newly created Office of Early Literacy. Staff in this office will include three new staff

members hired to assist the Governor's Early Literacy Task Force and spearhead efforts to train the 100 literacy coaches. These new staff members will play an important role in the coordination of all literacy efforts and the implementation of the Reading First initiative. Additional staff to be hired and supported by Reading First funding will include a Reading First project manager, two content coordinators, and a support staff position. Under the department's reorganization plan, it is likely that the Office of Early Literacy will be located in the central office in Trenton. In addition, nine reading support staff will be hired with Reading First funds to coordinate Reading First activities in districts and schools, as well as to assist in providing professional development activities and technical assistance and support.

Early literacy consultants will be contracted, as needed, to provide assistance with the development of high-quality training in scientifically based reading methods aligned with the goals of Reading First. Staff from the newly formed Division of Abbott Implementation will work with the SEA Reading First and Early Literacy staff, as needed to assist in the design and delivery of professional development activities as well as program implementation, monitoring and reporting. Additionally, an Office of Early Childhood Programs has been created and an assistant to the Commissioner for Early Childhood Programs has been hired. This office is responsible for the implementation of state-funded early childhood programs and the development of an early childhood curriculum framework to guide program development. This office will assist in providing the critical link between early childhood literacy efforts and K-3 reading programs.

A new student data system is being developed that will enable the state to track student success at benchmark grades. The department plans to have the system operational in the 2002-03 school year. The system will enable educators, parents and community members to track school success in order to participate in educational improvement efforts.

## **2.C. STATE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

*What staff will the LEA provide for the administration of the Reading First program? What is the timeline for carrying out activities related to the administration of the Reading First program? How will resources be used to implement the Reading First program?*

In New Jersey, Governor McGreevey has made early literacy the cornerstone of his administration's education policy. As a result, New Jersey's plan for the delivery of literacy programs will represent a coherent, comprehensive, systemic approach, involving all stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation process. Consistent with Reading First requirements, resources will be allocated to the most needy children within districts with the highest percentage of children reading below grade level. New Jersey's program will include a wide cross-section of urban and rural districts to maximize literacy improvement efforts.

Working closely with the Governor's Early Literacy Task Force and the Reading First Leadership Team, the New Jersey Department of Education will coordinate all literacy efforts via the Office of Early Literacy and the Reading First staff in the regional centers. This office will continue to seek the assistance of the interdivisional resource team (see Appendix D) consisting of representatives from the Offices of Academic and Professional Standards, Assessment, Abbott Implementation, Title 1, Early Literacy, Special Education, and Bilingual Education. Biographical information about each of these team members is included in the

appendix. Other SEA representatives may serve as needed during phases of grant development, implementation, and oversight/evaluation of the grant. National and state consultants will serve as advisors to the Reading First project and State Leadership Team throughout the life of the grant. Dr. Tim Shanahan, distinguished member of the National Reading Panel, has agreed to become an advisor to New Jersey's Reading First grant program.

The Reading First staff, in collaboration with the State Leadership Team, will assist with the coordination of the Reading First application, and will provide oversight and ongoing evaluation of the Reading First program. Most importantly, the Reading First staff (of approximately 15 personnel) will work with the State Leadership Team to establish a collaborative process for the delivery of customized technical assistance and professional development, identify valid, reliable assessment tools to assist districts in making informed decisions for children, and will establish a venue where best practices can be shared and replicated. Resumes for the Reading First leadership staff are included in the appendices section (see [Appendix C](#)). We firmly believe that the Reading First staff qualifications are appropriate and reflect the necessary teaching experiences/preparation in scientifically based reading, research, training and methods for the purposes of this grant. Additionally, all Reading First leadership staff will be attending the Harvard Institute, August 18-22, 2002, along with members of the Reading First Higher Education Council.

### **New Jersey's Process for Providing Professional Development/Technical Assistance**

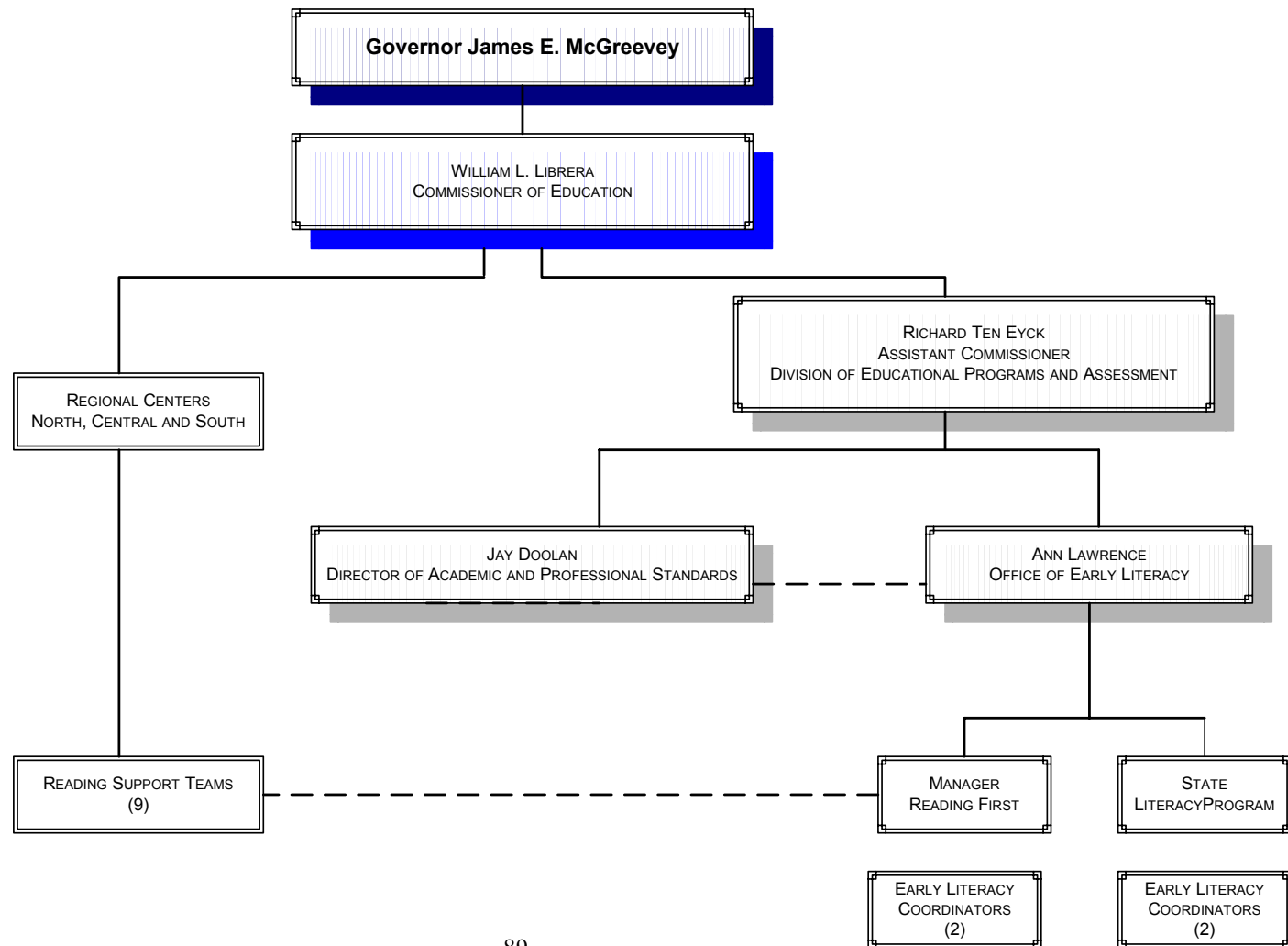
Understanding the need for comprehensive, consistent and continuous training for administrators, teachers, and Reading First school literacy teams, New Jersey has adopted a multi-tiered approach for the provision of professional development and technical assistance. The Office of Early Literacy, in collaboration with the Reading First Leadership Team (see Appendix C), will manage, coordinate and provide oversight of grant activities for the Reading First Program. In addition to professional development provided by the SEA reading staff, the department will recommend a variety of professional development training providers to ensure successful Reading First Program implementation. In addition, the department will focus its efforts on building cooperative agreements with outside agencies and consultants with an established record of successful work related to early literacy initiatives grounded in scientifically-reading research and the five components of effective reading instruction.

The department plans to hire a program manager and two content coordinators for the Reading First program to be located in the Office of Early Literacy. In addition, nine reading support staff will be hired and located in regional centers. The Reading First program manager will manage all activities of the Reading First grant and will be responsible for fiscal and programmatic operations of the grant. The program manager will need experience in grant writing and program implementation; management skills; in-depth understanding of reading, state standards, and scientifically based reading research; strong leadership skills; and the ability to facilitate collaborative groups. The program manager will oversee responsibilities of the regional content specialists (eleven people), and will be involved in planning and implementing training and working with the external evaluator, consultants, and higher education partners. The two content coordinators and the nine regional coordinators will provide on-site technical assistance, and will serve as the NJDOE's first contact regarding the grant. The staff will collect data and compile reports regarding grant implementation, recommend, design and/or provide training, and assist with the coordination of LEA literacy team activities. All professional

positions require a strong background in the development and implementation of research based reading programs. The support staff position will require experience in routine office procedures including competency in word processing, database and spreadsheet development. The following chart provides an overview of the proposed organizational chart for the early literacy initiative.



# Proposed State Organizational Chart for Early Literacy Initiative



As a requirement for participation in the Reading First Program, all LEAs funded under the program must establish a School Literacy Team in each of its participating schools, whose primary responsibility will be to provide continuous leadership, planning, and implementation of professional development opportunities and in-class support to instructional staff. Schools that are currently implementing whole school reform with school management teams in place should utilize their existing team members to support Reading First efforts.

These teams will participate in intensive, ongoing training via the Summer Literacy Institutes, provided yearly, beginning in 2003. These summer institutes will be organized by the Reading First staff and the State Leadership Team, with assistance from local districts, and will focus on topics related to the goals for Reading First. The department will work closely with LEAs to ensure strong adherence to evidenced-based instructional practices and scientific-based reading research. The district must provide an assurance that it will identify a process for continuous improvement by putting in place assessment mechanisms (including grade-level screening and diagnostic measures) for accountability and data driven decision-making.

In order to provide urban, rural, and suburban children equal opportunities to increase literacy levels, Governor McGreevey has outlined a plan that will target schools not eligible for Reading First funding. The plan will provide a total of \$10 million for reading coaches and other forms of assistance so that the quality of reading instruction and student achievement gaps improve for all New Jersey children. During the summer prior to implementation of the grant, (July-August, 2002), the Governor's Early Literacy Task Force will identify and provide training to 100 literacy coaches hired as part of the Governor's Early Literacy Initiative. This initiative will parallel the Reading First program, and provide reading coaches for many schools that are not eligible for Reading First funds yet have a large number of students with reading difficulties. Reading First staff will be able to use the collective expertise and materials from this training session to develop additional training for Reading First participants. The following timeline displays many of the Reading First activities.

The State's management plan for Reading First is fully coordinated with Governor McGreevey's state literacy initiative and compatible with the approaches developed by the Early Literacy Task Force. In response to the Governor's mandate to identify best practices and strategies in K-3, the Task Force examined a range of scientific research, including the National Reading Panel Report (Snow, Burns, Griffin, 1998) and publications from the Learning First Alliance, to identify research-based best practices of effective teachers, effective schools, and the content of effective research-based literacy programs. After a careful review of scientifically based reading research, recommendations were given for the implementation of effective practices, professional development, pre-service education and certification, and assessment. The Task Force Report will be disseminated, as early as July 2002, and the Office of Early Literacy will use this research report as a guideline for effective literacy instruction, and professional training of the Governor's Reading Coaches. This report is fully aligned to the Core Curriculum Content Standards for language arts literacy and addresses all five components of essential reading instruction. Additionally, this printed report will be available to districts in August 2002 and posted on the NJDOE web site and NJPEP.

The Reading First staff will coordinate Reading First activities, including professional development, with the Task Force Report, but the Reading First module of curriculum and instruction (to be developed by the NJDOE Reading First staff and Higher Education Council in

the fall 2002) will be the blueprint for reading instruction in participating Reading First schools and eventually in all K-3 classrooms around the state. The Reading First curriculum module will specify in greater depth the necessary knowledge and explicit skills to enable New Jersey teachers to fully address (in-depth) the five essential components of reading, as defined by the Reading First legislation and the National Research Council (1998). New Jersey's three-phase model of professional development will ensure that its teachers are provided with the ongoing, high-quality training and support to implement effective classroom change.

## Reading First State Activity Plan

Key Activity	Timeline	Responsible Staff	Outcomes
<b>I. Planning and Development</b>			
Establishment of a Reading First Leadership team according to the requirements of the Reading First legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Initiated communications with the governor's office (4/23/02)</li> <li>-Scheduled meeting of Leadership team (4/25/02)</li> <li>-First meeting of RF Leadership team (5/15/02)</li> </ul>	NJDOE Division of Educational Programs and Assessments	Reading First Leadership team will assist in the development of the state's plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on the selection of subgrantees</li> <li>• Assist in the oversight and evaluation of subgrantees</li> <li>• Build public advocacy for early literacy</li> </ul>
Ongoing meetings to assist with Reading First implementation and oversight	8/02 – 8/08	NJDOE Reading First staff	
Establish NJDOE interdepartmental team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Open dialogue among NJDOE divisions</li> <li>-Initial meeting (4/17/02)</li> <li>-Grant writing retreat (4/23/02)</li> </ul>	NJDOE directors, managers, and Reading First staff  Reading First director, manager, governor's liason, and Reading First staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Get buy-in from interdepartmental staff</li> <li>-Communicate program goals and ways to consolidate funding sources related to reading</li> </ul>
Identify national consultants to act as advisor to project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Contact three potential consultants to advise on project</li> <li>-Bidding process to contract with selected consultant (8/02)</li> </ul>	NJDOE Project Director and manager, Leadership Team	Contract with Reading First project advisor
Contact literacy groups interested in working with NJDOE	Contact state literacy organizations to discuss Reading First initiative 6/02 – 8/02	Project Director and manager	Increase collaboration at state level
Develop long range plan for Reading First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Entrance conference</li> <li>-Draft long range plan (4/23/02)</li> </ul>	Grants Management office, Director of Standards and Prof. Dev., Program Manager	Development of long range plan for Reading First proposal
Develop draft grant proposal for Reading First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Draft grant proposal reviewed by Commissioners (5/13/02)</li> <li>-Final revisions (5/16/02)</li> </ul>	NJDOE writing team  Program Director	Development of Reading First grant proposal

Key Activity	Timeline	Responsible Staff	Outcomes
Submit final copy of Reading First grant to U.S. Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review by Budget/Accounting (5/20/02)</li> <li>-Completed review/approval of grant proposal and assurances from Governor/Commissioner (5/24/02)</li> </ul> <p>May 29, 2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Edits and resubmittal to the USDOE (July 2002)</li> </ul>	<p>NJDOE Budget/Accounting</p> <p>Commissioners' signatures</p> <p>Reading First Director and program manager</p>	Development and refinement of Reading First grant proposal
Notice of award by the USDOE	July 2002	USDOE	Funding awarded to state
Development of Notification of Grant Proposal (NGO)	July 2002	Reading First Program Managers	Subgrant application will be approved
Notification to eligible LEAs	July 2002	Reading First Program Manager and staff for signature of Commissioner	Identified LEAs will have received information from NJDOE about their eligibility to apply for funds and the time and location of pre-application training sessions.
Training and follow-up technical assistance to eligible LEAs	August- Sept. 2002 2-day workshops at 3 regional locations and follow-up technical assistance by telephone and email. When appropriate, technical assistance to applicants will include site visits	Reading First Program Manager and staff with assistance from Verizon Corp., regional training centers and outside consultants	Eligible LEAs will have the information they need to apply for Reading First subgrants. Information will include scientifically based reading research, the requirements of Reading First, and the timeline for the application process.
Hire required administrative staff for Reading First (12 positions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advertise for positions 8/02</li> <li>-Hire for content specialists (11) and (1) manager</li> </ul>	NJDOE	Full-time Reading First staff will be hired to begin implementing grant and providing training and technical assistance.
Selection/training of subgrant reviewers	October 2002	Reading First Program Manager, leadership team members and NJDOE staff	Expert panel of reviewers will be established and trained to review Reading First applications.
Training of reading coaches from eligible Abbott districts	November 2002	Reading First Project Manager and members of the Governor's Early Literacy Taskforce	Trained reading coaches for Reading First schools.

Key Activity	Timeline	Responsible Staff	Outcomes
Identification and hiring of Reading First consultants per diem	October 2002	Reading First staff	A pool of certified regional trainers will be established to deliver professional development regionally and locally throughout the duration of the grant.
Submittal of Reading First subgrants; scoring of subgrants; recommendations submitted to the State Leadership Team	October 2002	Reading First Program Manager and NJDOE staff; expert panel of reviewers; State Leadership Team	Reading First subgrants will be scored by the expert panel of reviewers and presented for review to the State Leadership Team.
<b>Notification to successful LEAs (35)</b>	November 2002	State Leadership Team forwards recommendations to Commissioner of Education for approval	LEAs will be approved for Reading First funding
Awards Kickoff Conference for Reading First subgrantees	December 2002	Reading First Program Manager, NJDOE staff, Content Coordinators, Governor's Office, higher ed partners, and Commissioner of Education	Reading First subgrantees will be recognized at statewide conference, and will be provided with Reading First information, including the State Activity Plan and goals for Reading First.
<b>State Developed Training Module to Reading First Schools</b>			
Develop Reading First curricula based on scientific reading research, the 5 components of reading as described in federal guidance, and alignment to revised Language Arts Literacy standards for reading (3.1)	September – December 2002	Reading First Program Manager, NJDOE staff, and contracted services for curriculum development, higher education	Reading First curriculum will be developed through NJDOE contract with reading experts and literacy partnerships. Content will include the following topics: -Scientifically based instructional practices; -Alignment of curriculum and instruction with NJ state standards and assessments;
Develop a web-based curriculum module to assist providers with the five components of reading	September 2002 – March 2003	NJPEP staff, State leadership team, Reading First staff	-Foundational topics: cognitive characteristics of proficient and poor readers, the structure of English, and acquisition of first and second languages; -Instructional module to assist teachers with understanding the five

Key Activity	Timeline	Responsible Staff	Outcomes
			components of early reading and their classroom application.
Delivery of training/professional development for <b>Reading Coaches</b>	November 2002 – June 2003  Continuing Hours: (100 hours per year) <i><b>20 training days over 12 months required of all school literacy coaches</b></i>	Reading First Program Manager, NJDOE Content Coordinators, contracted reading experts, national consultants with in-depth knowledge of scientifically based reading research, and national consultants with knowledge of data driven decision-making to deliver statewide training.	Training model for reading coaches will be in place to be replicated in all schools over the next two years.
Delivery of leadership training for literacy teams in the 35 districts	November 2002 – June 2003	Professional consultants with expertise in scientifically based reading research	School Literacy Teams will receive the necessary leadership training to fulfill their responsibilities for Reading First.
Delivery of leadership training for literacy teams in the 35 districts	<b>Follow-up Summer Institutes</b> each successive year 2003-2008	Professional consultants with expertise in coaching and scientifically based reading research	School Literacy Teams will receive the necessary leadership training to fulfill their responsibilities for Reading First.
Delivery of Cadre I regional professional development	December 2002 – June 2003 5 additional sessions each successive year in each of 3 regions	Reading First Program Manager, NJDOE Content Coordinators, contracted reading experts, national consultants with in-depth knowledge of scientifically based reading research to deliver statewide training, and pool of certified regional trainers	All teaching staff with instructional responsibilities for reading in grades K-3, paraprofessionals will receive professional development training on the Reading First curriculum module and data driven decision-making and will make a commitment to changing instruction in their schools and classrooms. Staff will be prepared to return to their schools and to establish procedures for changing instructional practices.
Delivery of Cadre I <b>school-based/district professional development</b>	Beginning in January 2003 – ongoing through 2008	School-based Reading First Coordinator, Reading Coach, School Principal, and teachers identified as exemplary practitioners.	-Modeling and implementation of best practices and assessments in scientifically based reading methods by teachers identified as exemplary practitioners. <b>Reading coaches/school literacy teams</b> will facilitate school reform.

## State Reporting and Evaluation Plan for Reading First

Key Activity	Timeline	Responsible Staff	Outcomes
<b>State Technical Assistance and Monitoring</b> - This process will include subsequent workshops and technical assistance to the eligible local education agencies.			
<b>I. Technical Assistance</b>			
A. Conduct technical assistance workshops to provide Reading First information to 145 eligible applicants	August - September 2002	NJDOE Reading First Leadership Team, language arts literacy coordinator	Eligible applicants will receive the necessary information and guidance to develop high quality grant proposals grounded in SBRR.
B. Conduct more focused technical assistance to individual LEAs	September 2002	Reading First staff	Targeted assistance will be provided to those districts needing additional guidance.



<p><b>II. State assistance and monitoring</b> of LEAs related to implementation of scientifically based reading research methods, programs, and activities</p> <p>Develop a list serv to include the 35 Reading First LEAs</p> <p>Expand NJPEP web site to reflect goals of Reading First</p> <p>On-site visits</p> <p>Review annual progress of schools toward achieving reading goals</p>	<p>Ongoing for the duration of the six-year grant period, including on-site visits and technological support via NJPEP. (1/03 – 8/08)</p> <p>Beginning November 2002, and ongoing throughout grant implementation</p> <p>September 2002 – ongoing</p> <p>January 2003 and monthly visits thereafter over the six-year period</p> <p>Spring 2003 – annually through 2008</p>	<p>NJDOE Reading First staff</p> <p>NJDOE and Reading First Staff</p> <p>NJPEP staff</p> <p>Regional NJDOE staff and Reading First managers, external evaluator</p> <p>NJDOE Reading First staff and regional offices</p>	<p>-Reading First schools will receive the support they need to fully implement their scientific based reading programs, provide on-going reliable and valid assessments, and provide the necessary high-quality professional development to teachers to improve quality of instruction.</p> <p>- A listserv will be developed to support communication among participating schools, administrators, higher education partners, etc.</p> <p>-Reading First leadership will be assured that funds are being used effectively.</p> <p>- USDOE will be assured that New Jersey is implementing a high-quality reading program.</p>
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<b>State Evaluation Process</b> - This process will involve data collection, reporting, and evaluation and review of progress reports, annual budgets, and meetings with LEAs to provide ongoing feedback and support.			
<b>Key Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Selected external evaluator develops an evaluation design based on the state plan and research questions in the plan	Fall 2002	Independent evaluation contractor, Reading First Manager, NJDOE director and commissioners	Evaluation design completed and approved by the NJ Department of Education and State Leadership Team
Initial and ongoing collection of district/school data based on approved evaluation design	November 2002- September 2008	Contracted independent evaluator in collaboration with NJDOE	Appropriate measurements and data collection system will be established and available for the purposes of reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.
Annual testing in grades K-3	New Third Grade Assessment first administered in spring 2003; (e.g., Terra Nova administered in K-2)	NJDOE, external evaluator	Annual outcome-based measures will be administered in K-3 to determine progress monitoring.
Development of performance reports	Annual reports provided to the USDOE and schools (Fall 2002)	Contracted independent evaluator, Reading First Manager and NJDOE staff	Performance reports will include the following: -description of subgrantees -information on LEAs and school reading programs -results of state evaluation -other pertinent information.

## Reading First Budget

The following chart outlines the NJDOE's Reading First budget for the first three years of the program, 2002-05. The budget narrative details the critical expenses for personnel, professional development, and district subgrants.

**READING FIRST GRANT  
BUDGET  
2002-2005**

<b>Personnel :</b>	<b>Federal Funds:</b>			<b>TOTAL FEDERAL</b>
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Reading First Manager	\$72,761	\$72,761	\$72,761	\$218,283
Reading First Coordinator	\$66,268	\$66,268	\$66,268	\$198,804
Reading First Coordinator	\$66,268	\$66,268	\$66,268	\$198,804
Technical Assistant (1)	\$34,926	\$34,926	\$34,926	\$104,778
<b>Subtotal Personnel</b>	<b>\$240,223</b>	<b>\$240,223</b>	<b>\$240,223</b>	<b>\$720,669</b>
<b>Fringe Benefits:</b>				
@ 25.85% of Salaries	62,098	62,098	62,098	186,293
<b>Subtotal Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>\$62,098</b>	<b>\$62,098</b>	<b>\$62,098</b>	<b>\$186,293</b>
<b>Travel:</b>				
Visits to School Districts	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
				\$0
				\$0
<b>Subtotal Travel</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
<b>Equipment:</b>				
Computers/Printers/Technology	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$18,000
<b>Subtotal Equipment</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>Supplies:</b>				
Routine Office Supplies	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$2,250
<b>Subtotal Supplies</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$2,250</b>
<b>Contractual Programs:</b>				
Reading First Subgrants	\$14,741,083	\$14,741,083	\$14,741,083	\$44,223,249
				\$0
				\$0
External Evaluators	\$90,000	\$150,000	\$175,000	\$415,000
<b>Subtotal Contractual</b>	<b>\$14,741,083</b>	<b>\$14,741,083</b>	<b>\$14,741,083</b>	<b>\$44,223,249</b>
<b>Other:</b>				
OGMD charge:	\$13,357	\$13,357	\$13,357	\$40,071
Workshops -Technical Assistance training consultants; visitations to schools	\$74,085	\$74,085	\$74,085	\$222,255

Nine reading support personnel, three in each region to provide technical assistance	\$847,233	\$847,233	\$847,233	\$2,541,699
Professional Development (including the following): Educational Consultants: reading consultants per diem part time; rate to vary; cost of meeting rooms, etc.	\$2,395,426	\$2,395,426	\$2,395,426	\$7,186,278
1 national advisor	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$60,000
NJPEP to develop curriculum reading models	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$75,000
<b>Printing (NJDOE)</b>				
Reproduction, meeting materials	\$3,250	\$3,250	\$3,250	\$9,750
<b>Postage (NJDOE)</b>	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$4,500
<b>Telephone (NJDOE)</b>	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$18,000
<b>Office of Grants Administration</b>				\$0
<b>Office of Information Technology (OIT)</b>	\$2,572	\$2,572	\$2,572	\$7,716
<b>Subtotal Other</b>	<b>\$3,343,423</b>	<b>\$3,343,423</b>	<b>\$3,343,423</b>	<b>\$10,030,269</b>
<b>Direct Admin Services</b> (4.9 % of Admin. Costs)	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$16,697	\$50,091
<b>Subtotal Direct Administrative Services.</b>	<b>\$16,697</b>	<b>\$16,697</b>	<b>\$16,697</b>	<b>\$50,091</b>
<b>Indirect Costs</b> (3.1 % of Admin. Costs)	\$11,081	\$11,081	\$11,081	\$33,243
<b>Subtotal Indirect Costs</b>	<b>\$11,081</b>	<b>\$11,081</b>	<b>\$11,081</b>	<b>\$33,243</b>
<b>OGMD charges:</b>				
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,426,355</b>	<b>\$18,426,355</b>	<b>\$18,426,355</b>	<b>\$55,279,064</b>

## **SECTION 3: STATE REPORTING AND EVALUATION**

New Jersey's history of statewide reporting and evaluation is based on state-developed standardized tests at the grades four, eight, and eleven. Current tests assess students knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. For those students who do not pass the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), there is a Special Review Assessment (SRA) process. Additionally, the Alternative Proficiency Assessment (APA) was designed for those students with severe disabilities who cannot participate in other assessments due to the severity of their disabilities. The current reporting and evaluation of disaggregated assessment data can be found in the *New Jersey Statewide Summary and Cohort Summary Reports* that include a statewide listing of scores. The reports provide district scores for comparison among school districts rather than among individual students' scores.

In response to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Governor McGreevey's emphasis on literacy, the department is revising the state assessment program. Planned tests in social studies, the arts, and health and physical education have been put on hold. The department is working to contract with a new test development company to design and administer a new third grade test that is aligned with the revised language arts standards (adopted by the State Board in July 2002). Plans are underway to administer the new test in 2003. This new tool will prove invaluable as the state moves forward with the Reading First initiative. Efforts will focus on earlier and timelier score reporting so that the tests become tools that teachers can actually use to inform classroom instruction.

Testing in New Jersey has evolved from standardized to diagnostic assessments. For **Reading First**, standardized diagnostic assessments will be used across all participating schools, to collect and report out disaggregated data on the comprehensive, scientifically based reading performance of students. After diagnostic testing is administered and scores reported by teachers, each school will generate reading assessment data. These data will inform teaching by identifying root causes of low achievement by individual students. It will enable teachers to implement developmentally appropriate, instructional strategies to improve achievement in reading. New Jersey's professional development plan describes the importance of training teachers in understanding how to implement and interpret test data for the purposes of reading instruction.

### **3.A. EVALUATION STRATEGIES**

*How will the SEA evaluate the progress participating LEAs are making in improving reading achievement? How will the SEA use evaluation data to make decisions about continuation funding to LEAs?*

This proposal describes New Jersey's subgrant selection procedure. The Department of Education has taken a proactive stance on assessment for the purposes of Reading First by forming a Reading First Assessment Committee, comprised of experts who are familiar with SBRR, state goals for new assessments under "No Child Left Behind" legislation, and the goals for Reading First. The work of this committee will involve a comprehensive review process for selection of appropriate K-3 assessments, including screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments. The primary goal of the Reading First Assessment Committee will be to provide evidence to determine whether assessments are considered valid, reliable, and aligned with scientifically based reading research and state goals for the Reading First program.

## Criteria for Selecting Assessment Measures

The New Jersey Department of Education's Reading First Assessment Committee, in collaboration with the external evaluator and Reading First staff, will review, analyze, and recommend the formative tests/measurement instruments the LEAs will administer. The committee will determine the appropriateness of these tests for measuring early reading progress based on scientifically based reading research.

According to Good, Simmons, and Kane'enui's study of reading (2001) on the measurement of reading skills, a continuum of fluency-based indicators of foundational early literacy reading skills can predict reading outcomes, inform educational decisions, and change reading outcomes for students at risk of reading difficulty. Their study determined the need and identified Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills and Curriculum-Based Measurement Oral Reading Fluency foundational skills.

The Reading First Assessment Committee will use the following guiding questions to analyze and determine the criteria to select measures for assessment of foundational skills, primarily print concepts, alphabetic principle, and phonemic awareness. These questions are based on the research of recognized assessment experts (Adams, 1990; NRP, 2000; National Research Council, 1998; Simmons & Kame'enui, 1998). Three foundational skills and processes were identified that represent valid indicator skills along a continuum of skills that are prerequisite to later success. They include phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and fluency. For primary grades, assessments must reliably document and account for growth on a continuum of foundational skills, predict success or failure on criterion measures of performance; and provide an instructional goal.

New Jersey's Assessment Committee will refer to the following guiding questions for prescreening and evaluating K-2 assessment measures:

1. Does the test measure phonological awareness or the ability to hear and manipulate the sound structure of language?
2. Does the test measure alphabetic understanding or the mapping of print to speech and the phonological recoding of letter strings into corresponding sound?
3. Does the test measure accuracy and fluency with connected text?

According to Francis, Shaywitz, Stuebing, Shaywitz & Fletcher (1996), measuring early growth in a prevention-oriented system requires assessments and methods that measure growth reliability and validity, specify criterion-levels of performance for a single measure, assess performance on a continuum of linked measures related to one another, and document a child's progression toward meaningful outcomes. Questions that would guide the Reading First Assessment Committee on the above include:

1. How does this test/assessment measure growth validity reliability in and across grade levels?
2. What are the criterion-levels of performance for a single measure?
3. How is performance measured on a continuum of linked measures?
4. How is a child's progression toward meaningful outcomes documented?

## 5. Is there vertical compatability within and across grade levels?

Additional questions to guide the Reading First Assessment Committee are based on the work of Good, Simmons, and Kame'enui's (2001) continuum of fluency-based measures developed and validated for use with children in kindergarten and early first grade called the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Kaminski & Good, 1996) and Curriculum-Based Measurement Oral Reading Fluency (CBMORF) in grades 1-3. DIBELS assesses students' early literacy as they change over time. These questions are:

1. Will assessments at various grade levels be able to show correlations between earlier and later skills? Especially at the different grade levels
2. Are the assessments able to be linked to show or not show improvement?
3. Can assessments be adapted to the needs of individual students?
4. Do the results of assessments suggest ways in which assessments can drive classroom instruction?
5. Do/Can the assessment tools offer suggestions for informal reading assessments?
6. Is the knowledge/information that is being assessed included in NJ's K-3 Core Content Curriculum Standards? In other words, is there some kind of alignment of information?

The above questions are the foundation for the development of the scoring guides/rubrics that are currently being developed by the Reading First Assessment Committee. Checklists and survey instruments will be developed to determine the appropriate assessments for each grade level and benchmark goal. Additionally, selected K-3 assessment programs must be aligned to the reading and writing standards in the revised *New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards* for language arts literacy (2002).

### Overview of Reading Assessment Process

*Reading assessment* is the gathering, recording, and analyzing of data about the student's reading performance. Assessment provides a vivid, public report of reading outcomes. It informs instruction, thereby, helping schools, teachers, and children achieve important reading outcomes. To determine the progress of students participating in the scientific-based reading approach program, a number of reading test activities and instruments may be used. Research was conducted by the Reading First Assessment Committee to determine current available reading assessments. These menus accomplish the purposes of an effective, comprehensive, scientific based reading program with four purposes: *outcome, screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring*. Before selecting testing instruments for programs, the following steps should be considered.

***The first step is to develop a systematic and careful process for creating assessment menus.*** This is accomplished through the formation of the *Reading First Assessment Committee*. This **Assessment Committee** establishes criteria to evaluate reading measures; selects reading measures for review; describes logistical requirements of test use; and establishes a review and recommendation process. Sample tests reviewed by the Reading First Assessment Committee include the following: *Reading First Assessment Committee* include: *Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment, Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery; The Test of Phonological Awareness; Gray Oral Reading Test-IV, GORT-4.* (A more detailed listing is provided at the end

of this section). Sample Spanish tests include: *Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody*, *TVIP*, *The Observation Survey (Spanish Equivalent)*, *Developmental Reading Assessment (Spanish Equivalent)*, *Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey*, *Aprenda: La Prueba de Logros en Espanol, Segunda Edicion, Pre-Lax 2000*, *Spanish Reading Comprehension Test*, *La Prueba de Realizacion, Segunda Edicion*, *Spanish Assessment of Basic English, Second Edition*, and *Texas Primary Reading Inventory—Spanish Version*. The Assessment Committee will continue to preview various early assessments in the weeks ahead to determine the most appropriate measures to recommend to LEAs and Reading First schools. The external evaluator will collaborate with the Assessment Committee and Reading First staff to make final assessment choices, based on the Assessment Committee's expert recommendations.

***The second step is to ensure test validity.*** A valid assessment is essential. *Validity* refers to evidence that the test measures what it is supposed to measure. A primary concern is that the assessment measures the beginning reading core areas of phonemic awareness; phonics; fluency; comprehension; and vocabulary. In addition, any form of instruction and testing, should align with New Jersey's revised K-3 Core Curriculum Content Standards for reading and writing that support the accomplishments outlined in "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children" (National Research Council, 1998).

***The third step is to consider how the program will be rated for success.*** *Evaluation* is the process of examining and judging the value of the program. Formative and Summative evaluations are necessary to determine the program's success. *Formative evaluation* is ongoing. Data will be obtained through the diagnostic testing instruments, observation checklists, portfolios, and other performance-based activities. During the formative evaluation stage, attention will be given to gathering information in order to answer questions about whether or not the program is operating as intended.

The four purposes of assessment define how an effective reading program can be measured and proven to be accountable. The purposes are described below:

1. The ***reliability*** of the assessment refers to the stability or consistency of test scores. To have confidence in assessment, it is expected that the same test results would occur after one or more test administrations.
2. The ***accountability*** of the assessment is central to Reading First because it provides the cornerstone for an assessment system that supports schools to change reading outcomes for children. Since 1998, accountability for grade-level reading outcomes in New Jersey has been on a standardized state accountability assessment offered at the fourth-grade level. In 2003, a new third-grade level test will be administered. Students are considered to be at grade level, if they meet the state standard on a statewide test. For Reading First, measuring reading progress of young students in the early grades, beginning in the fall of kindergarten, is essential in determining reading difficulties early. When reading difficulties are identified early, additional targeted instructional intervention is provided to achieve grade-level reading outcomes.
3. An ***outcome assessment*** ensures accountability because it informs districts about necessary actions and early reading intervention and additional instruction needed to change reading outcomes. Outcomes in the important beginning reading core areas should be reported at the beginning and end of the academic year. Mid-year reporting is optional. The following



frameworks are samples of kindergarten, first, second, and third grade outcome assessments. They represent the important beginning reading skill areas to be assessed at the start and end of each grade level.

### **Kindergarten Outcome Assessment**

*(Formative Evaluation)*

*(Summative Evaluation)*

Reading Skill Areas To be Assessed	Suggested Beginning of Year	Optional Middle of Year	Suggested End of Year
Phonemic Awareness	X	X	X
Phonics		X	X
Fluency			
Comprehension			
Vocabulary	X	X	X

### **First-Grade Outcome Assessment**

*(Formative Evaluation)*

*(Summative Evaluation)*

Reading Skill Areas To be Assessed	Suggested Beginning of Year	Optional Middle of Year	Suggested End of Year
Phonemic Awareness	X	X	X
Phonics	X	X	X
Fluency		X	X
Comprehension			X
Vocabulary	X	X	X

### **Second-Grade Outcome Assessment**

*(Formative Evaluation)*

*(Summative Evaluation)*

Reading Skill Areas To be Assessed	Suggested Beginning of Year	Optional Middle of Year	Suggested End of Year
Phonemic Awareness			
Phonics	X		
Fluency	X	X	X
Comprehension	X	X	X
Vocabulary	X	X	X

### **Third-Grade Outcome Assessment**

*(Formative Evaluation)*

*(Summative Evaluation)*

Reading Skill Areas To be Assessed	Suggested Beginning of Year	Optional Middle of Year	Suggested End of Year

Phonemic Awareness			
Phonics			
Fluency	X	X	X
Comprehension	X	X	X
Vocabulary	X	X	X

4. While *formative evaluation* is ongoing, *summative evaluation* occurs at the end of each year. There is a need to show New Jersey K-3 reading progress at the end of each year. A statewide, standardized test, such as the 2003 New Jersey Third Grade Test or a commercial standardized test, such as the Terra Nova will be used to achieve this measure. Summative evaluation questions would be focused on short and long-term outcomes, such as reading skills outcomes and reading achievement gains. Schools will be required to develop grade-level reading outcomes for the purposes of Reading First to assist with formative and summative evaluations.

An action plan for implementing a district-wide early assessment system will be developed by the NJDOE Reading First Assessment Committee. This plan designates what is required for assessment. It specifies who is responsible and targets completion dates. It includes measure selection and measure acquisition, and it provides a professional development plan to ensure training in high-quality test administration, rubric scoring, and score interpretation.

Reporting information requires a data collection process and schedule. The Reading First Assessment Committee will specify when measures will be collected, who distributes materials, and where data will be collected. Professional development on how to use data and inform instruction will be provided.

### **3.B. STATE REPORTING**

*How will the SEA meet all of its Reading First reporting requirements?*

The goals of the evaluation for Reading First are to provide a fair and accurate assessment of the project, to understand the factors that led to project successes and challenges, and to facilitate the project in its development through formative and summative evaluation activities and feedback. The evaluation will focus first on the effectiveness and impact of the project, and second, on providing formative and summative information and support to program activities over the three-year period of the grant.

New Jersey will meet Reading First reporting requirements through assessing and evaluating, on a regular basis (twice per year), the progress of local districts that receive Reading First funds. LEAs must select from the NJDOE's state-approved programs that are considered to scientifically based and addressing the five essentials of reading. As soon as the NJDOE makes its subgrant awards (in multiple rounds), the state will submit the relevant information (subgrant identification report) to the Reading First Office, U.S. Department of Education. The NJDOE, in collaboration with the external evaluator and national consultant, will identify valid and reliable instruments to use in gauging progress in improving student achievement. The information gained from these measures will be used to determine whether individual schools should receive

continuation funding of their subgrants at the end of three years. **Reading First schools will be expected to demonstrate reading gains by 10% each year.**

A comprehensive, midpoint progress report will supplement the state's annual report to the U.S. Department of Education at the end of the third year of Reading First implementation. The state will establish data standards for performance indicators and other collected information with the assistance of the external evaluator and the U.S. Department of Education. Electronic reporting will assist the state, both at the local and state levels in fulfilling federal information requests.

The NJ Department of Education will address the following questions in its annual report:

1. How has the state met all program requirements and obligations related to the implementation and administration of Reading First?
2. What process will the state use in identifying the schools and LEAs that report the largest gains in reading achievement?
3. How will the state report on state progress and the progress the LEAs are making in reducing the number of students in grades 1-3 served by Reading First who are reading below grade level? What methods of collecting and reporting data will result in the submission of data that are valid and reliable?
4. How does the state plan on reporting on increases in numbers or percentages of students reading at or above grade level, including students in certain categories reading at or above grade level?

### **Use of External Evaluator**

It is a common tenet of program evaluation that a fair assessment of the efficacy of a program needs to be conducted by an agency independent of the organization that is implementing the program. To that end, the New Jersey Department of Education will take outside bids and contract with an external evaluator to realize and execute the evaluation that is described in this section. The New Jersey Department of Education will select an evaluator with an understanding of scientific-based reading research and extensive experience in program evaluation, and also understanding of literacy development and research, evaluation of young children, and experience with special populations (e.g. special education populations and second language learners). The external evaluator will collaborate with the Reading First staff, including the Reading First Assessment Committee, to ensure that evaluation instruments, observation schedules, activities, and reports support effective implementation of the grant.

Another basic tenet of program evaluation is the need to form an equal and collaborative partnership between New Jersey's Reading First Leadership Team, NJDOE staff, and other reading specialists/higher education educators associated with Reading First. *Dr. Tim Shanahan of the University of Chicago and Dr. Jeffrey Smith of Rutgers University will provide expert quantitative input.* The collaboration enables the joint formulation of meaningful questions and determination of appropriate methods. Dr. Shanahan will provide guidance and expert opinion to the Reading First staff and Leadership Team as a national advisor to the project.

### **Multi-Level Evaluation**

Thirty Abbott school districts, along with five other school districts, will participate in the Reading First project. These schools will be actively participating in a variety of professional development activities, including intensive assessment training related to the successful implementation of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based measures. In addition, schools will be expected to implement a comprehensive data analysis system to record and analyze individual student progress. Ongoing workshops held at regional offices by trained staff will enable teachers to receive expert professional development and administer early assessments effectively throughout the year. This collection of Reading First schools, personnel, programs, and instructional activities comprise the Reading First project. Successful evaluation of this project needs to examine the project as a whole, but it also has to look at the implementation of the project at each participating school. In order to maximize the potential for replication of school successes, it is necessary to examine each site scientifically and quantitatively to see what choices and factors are associated with the highest levels of success.

### **Quasi-Experimental Approach**

An ideal evaluation design would be to use an experimental approach with schools being randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions. That is not practical in this setting since schools participating in Reading First need to be selected on the basis of specific criteria. The problem for the evaluation then, becomes one of approximating experimental conditions. In the place of a randomized control, it is possible to look for a number of alternative contrasts and comparisons. Fortunately, such contrasts and comparisons are available. To begin, student growth can be examined over the course of the project. This growth can be compared to several useful contrasts. The first comparison would be with the grade cohorts in the participating schools just preceding the implementation cohorts. The second comparison can be made with similar, non-participating schools in districts with multiple primary schools. The third comparison can be made with statewide averages on measures administered by the State of New Jersey. The external evaluator, along with advisors (e.g., Dr. Shanahan) to the Reading First project, will assist the Department of Education with final decisions regarding the Reading First evaluation design.

### **Evaluating Specific Components**

Some of the goals of Reading First are described as implementation or process goals. These are programs or activities that function in the service of the goal of improving reading achievement, such as professional development activities. In part, their success is determined by the overall success of the program, but it is also necessary to conduct evaluations of these components as they occur. These will be evaluated through participant surveys (e.g., teachers, administrators, students, parents), observations of subsequent teaching, teaching logs maintained by teachers, and classroom observations using a state-developed, classroom evaluation rubric addressing scientific-based reading research and the five essentials of reading.

## **Goals to Be Addressed in the Evaluation**

The goals of Reading First include both outcome and process goals. Both types of goals will be addressed by the evaluation. The various goals and the means to evaluate them are presented below. Specific instruments that will be used as measures in the evaluation are described in the subsequent section.

### ***Outcome Goals***

- **Students' Reading Achievement**

The critical question in the Reading First evaluation is, simply, "Do students read better as a result of their involvement in the program?" The basic approach to answering this question will be to use a time series analysis using measures (see below) from the spring of each year to look for reading growth. Progress in the participating schools will be compared to contrast schools, to previous performance of comparable cohorts at the participating schools, and to statewide averages and averages of other school districts of similar socio-economic status. In addition to looking at growth overall, special analyses will be conducted for special education students, limited English proficiency students, and non-classified students experiencing reading difficulties. The analysis will also include an in-depth look at the transition from kindergarten to first grade.

### ***Process Goals***

- **Professional Development for Teachers**

A critical component of the Reading First program is to enhance the ability of teachers in participating schools to teach the five essentials of reading that are grounded in scientific research, based on the National Reading Panel Report (2000) and National Research Council's findings (1998). In particular, the NJDOE is concerned with the ability of teachers to present a direct and systematic approach to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. A wide variety of programs and other professional development activities are planned around this goal. Two approaches to the evaluation will be taken. First, professional development activities will be evaluated by participants (on an ongoing basis) as they occur. Secondly, observations of participating teachers by trained administrators/supervisors will be conducted throughout the year to assess the efficacy of the programs and the need for additional and targeted training. Evaluation will be ongoing at the state, regional, and local levels.

## **Level of Implementation Analysis**

As mentioned at the beginning of this section on evaluation, in order to understand why successful programs are successful, it is necessary to look at how the program is being evaluated. To that end, the external evaluator will further assist the Department of Education with a comprehensive program of data collection in looking at level of implementation. These data will be used both for relating program characteristics and implementation levels to outcome measures, and to provide a vehicle for regular formative feedback to schools and to the Reading

First administration. This program will involve regular observations of classroom instruction, interviews with administrators, teachers, parents, and the development and administration of surveys to participants.

### **Local Assessment Coordinators**

The evaluation plan calls for an extensive program of data collection and analysis. Local level data will be collected in schools by the Reading First Coordinator, in collaboration with the School Literacy Team. In order to facilitate data collection and ensure consistency in data collection across sites, Reading First Coordinators will be in charge of local administration of measures, collection of information and transmittal of that information to the external evaluator, and will serve as the contact person to arrange meetings and observations for the external evaluator. The external evaluator will provide training to the Reading First/test coordinator.

### **Timeline for Evaluation Activities:**

A timeline follows that provides a summary of evaluation activities.

EVALUATION DESIGN TIMELINE: YEARS ONE AND TWO			
Fall – Winter 2002	Fall 2002 -Spring 2003	Fall 2003	Spring 2004
Funding awarded to schools (November 2002)	State technical assistance and professional development	Participating schools will begin full implementation	—————→
External evaluator - selects and administers instruments (e.g. surveys, needs assessments) for baseline data	—————→	Ongoing	Ongoing
Collect baseline data at LEA, school, and classroom levels	—————→	Data collection, analysis, and reporting	Ongoing
Train LEA Reading First test coordinators (beginning December 2002)	—————→	Ongoing	Professional development
	Administer Terra Nova outcome-based measure annually	First baseline diagnostic data -Administer pretests (e.g., DRA, DIBELS) twice per year	Administer post-test diagnostic measures (e.g., DRA, DIBELS)
		—————→	—————→
	Evaluation of professional development activities	—————→	
	Level of implementation assessment of instructional activities	—————→	
Implementation of revised state standards (July 2, 2002)	New third grade test administered		State third grade test
			Summative reports back to school districts

EVALUATION DESIGN TIMELINE: YEARS THREE AND FOUR			
Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006
Implementation continues	End of year status determined continued funding	Continued implementation for funded districts	—————→
Continue to administer surveys and needs assessments	—————→	Ongoing	Ongoing
Continue to collect data at LEA, school, and classroom levels	—————→	Data collection, analysis, and reporting	Ongoing
Technical assistance with data collection and analysis	—————→	Ongoing	Ongoing
Diagnostic reading assessment (e.g., DIBELS, DRA) pretests	Post-tests (e.g., DIBELS, DRA) —————→	Pretests (e.g., DIBELS, DRA)	Post-tests (e.g., DIBELS, DRA) —————→
Administer classroom-based reading measures – ongoing	—————→	—————→	—————→
Evaluation of professional development activities	Review and report on professional development	Evaluate activities	—————→
	Level of implementation assessment of instructional activities	—————→	—————→
	Third grade test administered		State third grade test
			Summative reports back to school districts



EVALUATION DESIGN TIMELINE: YEARS FIVE AND SIX			
Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008
Implementation continues; modifications may be made based on data	_____→	_____→	_____→
Continue to administer surveys and needs assessments	_____→	_____→	_____→
Continue to collect data at LEA, school, and classroom levels	_____→	Data collection, analysis, and reporting	Final data collection and analysis
Technical assistance with data collection and analysis	_____→	_____→	_____→
Pretests (e.g., DRA and DIBELS)	Post-tests (e.g., DRA and DIBELS) _____→	Pretests (e.g., DRA and DIBELS)	Post-tests (e.g., DRA and DIBELS) _____→
Administer ongoing reading measures to monitor progress	_____→	_____→	_____→
Evaluation of professional development activities	_____→	_____→	Report on professional development activities
Level of implementation assessment of instructional activities	Ongoing	_____→	_____→
	Third grade test administered		State third grade test
Data collection and analysis continues; on-going informal reporting to DOE and LEA	_____→	_____→	Summative reports back to school districts
			Final report to NJDOE (July)

With regard to assessments at the school and district levels, K-3 assessments will be ongoing throughout the course of the **Reading First** program implementation. The administered early screening and diagnostic measures will assist teachers and parents in gauging a child's early literacy progress, including oral language development. All evaluations selected will be grade- and age-appropriate, and will help teachers in developing instructional strategies that meet the needs of individual students, including bilingual/ESL and special education students. These assessments will assist teachers and reading coaches in identifying those students most at risk for reading failure, so that early and appropriate interventions can be provided in a timely manner.

A *formative evaluation* of LEA activities will include: professional development activities, research-based reading programs and methods, transition and intervention programs, incentive reading programs, extended learning opportunities, early screening procedures, formal and informal assessments, and classroom instructional strategies. A *summative evaluation* will determine changes in teaching practices, children referred to special education, teachers' knowledge and skills, family involvement, and reading achievement.

The primary focus of evaluation will be on the project effectiveness and impact over five years, particularly during the first three-years of **Reading First** implementation. The New Jersey Department of Education will seek answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent are the regional and state level activities effective in supporting professional development and program implementation for Reading First?
2. To what extent are the LEA program activities for Reading First addressing scientifically based reading research related to the five essentials of reading; use of reading programs and materials; professional development; early screening and diagnostic assessments; instructional strategies; differentiated instruction for ESL and special education students?
3. To what extent is professional development enhancing the knowledge and skills of veteran and novice teachers and administrators?
4. To what extent is this program impacting classroom instruction for all students, particularly the bottom 20% of students?
5. To what extent is this program affecting classroom assessment strategies?
6. To what extent is this program improving K-3 students' reading knowledge and skills?
7. To what extent are the methods of instruction effective with second language learners and what are the characteristics of these effective ESL programs?
8. To what extent are transitional programs preparing kindergartners for first grade, including those children most at risk for inappropriate referral to special education?
9. To what extent is the data- analysis system, selected by schools, useful to teachers in collecting and reporting student data?

## Student Assessment Measurements

In order to answer these questions, the external evaluator will rely on data collection from the New Jersey Department of Education. This will include: results from the new New Jersey Third Grade Assessment (beginning in 2003); Terra Nova Assessment in the spring; informal and formal diagnostic assessments; teacher, parent and administrator interviews; student, parent, teacher, and administrator surveys; teacher logs; and classroom observations by trained administrators/supervisors. The Reading First Department staff and Assessment Committee plan to work with the outside evaluator to select and implement developmentally appropriate assessments. The assessment design will include both quantitative and qualitative measures and require LEAs to administer, score, and report student assessment information in reading and writing (e.g. BRI/Terra Nova and CTB Writing Assessment) annually in kindergarten, grades one, two, and three. In addition, teachers will be required to keep professional writing logs of classroom and professional development activities that will be used in data collection. The **Terra Nova** (external evaluator will make final recommendation to the NJDOE) will be administered in the spring of each year in grades 1-2, beginning in 2003. An identified statewide Third Grade Test will be determined by the state. Other uniform grade-appropriate measures will be selected by the Reading First staff and Assessment Committee and implemented periodically in kindergarten. Reliability and validity information will be used in determining final assessment measures used in Reading First schools.

A longitudinal time-series design is planned for assessing students' reading performance in grades 1-3. As part of the analysis, student data will be disaggregated using the variables prescribed for Title I school wide programs (e.g., ethnicity, gender, poverty, language proficiency, mobility, disability). This information will provide the evaluator with the differential effects among various student populations. It will also provide the state with added data in determining program effectiveness among second language learners and special education students with regard to incorrect referrals. Baseline data for Reading First schools will be established by the state in spring 2003, along with other formative and summative data provided by the LEAs, beginning in fall 2002.

Identified assessment measures in the following chart have been reviewed and are considered to meet the standard for approval by the New Jersey Department of Education and the Reading First Assessment Committee. The state will continue to evaluate assessments, reading programs, and materials in the weeks ahead, in collaboration with the external evaluator and consultants to the project. LEAs will have some flexibility in the selection of those state-approved assessments that best meet the needs of their respective school populations. The suggested timeline for administration is provided in the chart that follows:

<b>TENTATIVE LIST OF APPROVED ASSESSMENT MEASURES (AS OF MAY 2002)</b>		
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Instrument Used</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Standardized Tests	* Terra Nova	Spring of 2003 & 2004 9/ 03, 4/ 04, 9/ 04, 4/ 05
Initial survey administered to teachers, parents, administrators, students	TBD	April 2003
Age-appropriate and diagnostic assessments for K <i>(schools choose from this list and others approved by the state)</i>	*Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (Clay, 1993a) *Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997) *Yopp-Singer Phoneme Segmentation Measure (Yopp,1988) *Spelling test composed of 25 most frequently used words (Fry's Word List) *Writing samples	September 2003  September 2003  September 2003  January 20033  September, October, November, January, March, April 2003-05
Age-appropriate and diagnostic assessments for Grade 1	*Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (Clay, 1993a); *Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997); *Yopp-Singer Phoneme Segmentation Measure (Yopp,1988); *Spelling test composed of the 80 most frequently used words for K-1 (Fry list); *Writing Samples	September 2003  September 2003  September 2003  October, February, April 2002-04 September, October, November, January, March, April
Age-appropriate and diagnostic assessments for Grade 2- 3	*Developmental-Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997); *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (MacGinitie & MacGinite, 1989); *The Names Test of Decoding (Cunningham, 1995); *Spelling Tests composed of the remainder of words in the most frequently used wordlist (Fry List);*Writing Samples	September 2003  September 2003  September 2003 October 2003, March 2004  October, January, February, March, April

In addition to the above-mentioned assessments, other assessments that target the five essentials of early reading will be reviewed for inclusion on the state-approved list. Teachers and School Literacy Teams, participating in the **Reading First** program, will attend state technical assistance and district-level workshops where test consultants, familiar with SBRR and the principles of reading instruction will provide intensive training in screening, diagnostic and ongoing, classroom-based assessments for young children. Teachers will receive approximately 25 hours of advanced training in early assessments.

### **Criteria for Selection of Evaluator**

The New Jersey Department of Education will work collaboratively with other divisions within the department to develop an articulation agreement which details all services to be provided and the fees paid to the collaborating agencies. An external evaluator will work with the Reading First staff and Assessment Committee to coordinate, assess and evaluate local education agency activities. The Reading First Leadership Team will provide added input into this process.

The external evaluator will be contracted based on a past record of effectiveness in working with scientifically based reading research projects, Departments of Education, elementary schools, primary grades (preschool through third grade), higher education, and literacy groups in the state and nation. Final selection of an outside evaluator will be based on the following criteria:

1. Record of past effectiveness in working with the Departments of Education and other state agencies;
2. Expertise and experience with scientifically-based reading research, current assessment instruments and practices, and related instructional practices;
3. History of working in early childhood education;
4. Experience working in broad-based research efforts at state and national levels;
5. Experience working with large urban school districts and administering evaluative measures at the school/classroom level;
6. Record of assisting local education agencies and test coordinators with planning, implementing, and evaluating K-3 assessment programs;
7. Experience working with developing attitudinal surveys, and planning, administering and evaluating of early literacy diagnostic measures; and
8. Experience working with specialized populations like second language learners and special education.

The Reading First Leadership Team will be informed throughout the grant period on evaluation and performance measures and the planned contract with the external evaluator. The external evaluator will have input into the final selection of state-approved assessments for the purposes of Reading First. The evaluator, in consultation with the Assessment Committee and Reading First Leadership Team, will make final decisions regarding assessment choices.

## **Evaluation Strategies and Actions**

Evaluation strategies must include rigorous assessments with proven validity and reliability. The assessments should measure progress in the five essential components of scientific based reading research instruction – phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral reading skills, and reading comprehension strategies. A comprehensive scientific based reading program must include the following components.

***Screening Assessments*** are administered to determine which students are at risk for reading difficulty and who will need intervention. Screening assessments should have predictive validity to determine which children are likely to experience reading difficulty and should identify children early who need additional instructional intervention. Screening is only valuable when followed with additional instructional intervention so that students achieve grade level reading outcomes.

***Early screening*** identifies children at risk of reading difficulty and identifies children who need additional intervention. According to the National Reading First Assessment Committee, research from a longitudinal study showed that early screening identified children who needed additional intervention. These students were followed from the beginning of first grade to the end of the fourth grade. As a result of the additional instructional intervention, a research-based comprehensive reading program was implemented for all students, and children at risk for reading difficulty were randomly assigned to a control group or to a group receiving substantial instructional intervention. After four years, children receiving substantial additional instructional intervention beyond an effective comprehensive reading program (1) progressed more rapidly than control students, (2) had reading skills more like the low risk group than the at risk group, and (3) were reading about at grade level.

***Diagnostic Assessments*** are administered to students who need additional intervention. The following five questions assist in determining the amount and type of intervention needed.

1. On which of the important beginning reading skill areas are the students on track, and on which do they need additional instructional intervention?
2. Which specific beginning reading skills has the student mastered or not mastered?
3. How much instructional intervention are the students likely to need? For example, smaller groups, extra time, more practice, more modeling or more scaffolding?
4. Which intervention programs are likely to be effective?
5. Which students have similar instructional needs and will form an appropriate group for instruction?

***Classroom-Based Instructional Assessments*** are used to determine if students are making adequate progress or if students need more support to achieve grade-level reading outcomes. The following factors assist in this determination.

- Children respond differently, even to instruction that is research based and usually effective.

- In order to get all children at grade level, teachers must get each child at grade level and keep him/her there.
- When children begin to get off track, recognize this and make necessary modifications to instruction or provide additional instructional intervention to keep them on track for at grade level reading outcomes.

## **Process and Criteria for Selecting Reading Measures**

The following guidance will help LEAs to determine which assessment tools are appropriate for their needs.

1. Establish criteria to evaluate reading measures. Develop a checklist with the following questions:
  - Does the test measure an important beginning reading skill?
  - Does it provide sufficient information to assess whether the student is at-grade level?
  - Is the test reliable? Does it measure performance consistently and is it valid? Does it strongly relate to the skill being measured?
  - Does the normative sample provide a meaningful comparison group for the students who will be assessed?
2. Select reading measures for review. Consider the following elements.
  - The test is frequently used in schools.
  - The test is frequently used in research/evaluation studies.
  - The test is prominent on lists developed by agencies and organizations.
  - An established district assessment committee recommends the test.
3. Describe the logistical requirements of test use.
  - Determine if teachers, aides, or school psychologists will administer the test.
  - The administration decides formats and time requirements of the assessment.
  - Determine the cost of the test.
  - Schedule the amount of training time and determine the qualifications of testers.
4. Establish a review and recommendation process.
  - Frequently used and prominent measures will be reviewed using a standardized review form.
  - A minimum of 2 qualified reviewers will analyze each reading measure.
  - The district assessment committee will review the findings and make the final decisions based on the extent to which the measures meet the evaluation criteria.
5. After selecting the tests, plan for assessments.
  - Schedule the time to assess and develop a district-wide testing schedule.
  - Train the testers or teachers.
  - Score tests.
  - Return information to teachers.
  - Help teachers to use the information to plan instruction and intervention.
  - Schedule regular sessions in which teachers discuss their students' scores and identify ways to incorporate the information into instruction.
  - Aggregate and disaggregate data across districts.



The steps to developing an action plan are listed below (see [Appendix F](#)).

**Step 1:** Specify necessary steps to implement plan. Meet with district and school level personnel to develop a plan to implement an early assessment system. Indicate what is necessary to achieve each assessment purpose, such as screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments

**Step 2:** Document degree of implementation. Specify who is responsible and target completion date for each of the following actions:

- Measure Selection
- Measure Acquisition
- Professional Development
- Data Collection Process and Schedule
- Scoring and Data Management
- Information Reporting and Use

### **3. C. PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL EVALUATION**

*Will the SEA and subgrant LEAs, if asked, participate in the national evaluation of the Reading First program?*

New Jersey will contract with an independent evaluator who will coordinate and conduct a five-year, quantitative evaluation of Reading First. The New Jersey Department of Education, if asked, agrees to participate in the national evaluation of Reading First, as well as participate in the identification of comparison LEAs for use in the national evaluation of Reading First. Funded LEAs and schools will be required to submit a statement of assurance that they are willing to participate in the national evaluation.

## **SECTION 4: CLASSROOM LEVEL IMPACT**

Classroom instruction and assessment will change as teachers participate in highly effective professional development workshops over time that are scientifically based and support the five components of reading. When teachers feel empowered and free to take risks to implement alternative teaching strategies, classrooms will begin to reflect learning that is learner-centered, actively engaging students and addressing individual students' developmental and proficiency levels. For the purposes of Reading First, trained school principals/supervisors should evaluate teachers in the use of the following classroom techniques related to SBRR and the five components of reading (rubric to be developed by the Reading First Leadership Team):

- Does the teacher implement a broad set of techniques for addressing individual students in a class?
- Does the teacher demonstrate rapidly which technique is needed at a given time for each particular student?
- Does the teacher integrate these techniques effectively while teaching a diverse classroom? (Learning First Alliance, 2000, p.28)

A primary goal of the Reading First professional development plan is to use a three-tiered approach and focus on all five essentials of reading initially (awareness stage). Next, professional development should concentrate more deeply on each of the five components of reading, so that teachers gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the classroom (knowledge stage). Lastly, professional development will enable teachers to integrate the most appropriate techniques effectively for both individual and group settings, while teaching to a diverse classroom (application). This three-tiered model provides teachers with the foundational skills and knowledge over time. These three questions, along with more specific questions to address the five essentials of reading, will enable school literacy teams (particularly the principal) to monitor teacher progress toward implementation of evidence-based classroom reading practices. The external evaluator will work with the Reading First Leadership Team to develop a Teacher Evaluation Criteria (rubric) to use in teacher evaluations for this grant.

### **KEY READING FIRST CLASSROOM CHARACTERISTICS**

*What is the SEA's vision for how a Reading First classroom will look?*

In this section, New Jersey describes how the Reading First program will impact K-3 classroom level instruction in participating schools, as well as K-3 classroom instruction throughout the state. The goal is to replicate effective scientifically based methods and procedures used in these high-poverty Reading First schools in all elementary schools of New Jersey. Contrary to the claims made by some of the “latest” and “best” reading practices, a “balanced” approach to reading is not 50% whole language and 50% phonics (National Reading Panel, 2000; National Research Council, 1998). The state supports the idea that a balanced approach to reading is determined by the educational needs of the students. Recognizing that there is no “one size fits all” model for all students, it is important to note that certain strategies and best practices work for all students, even those students living in high poverty, low-performing school communities. New Jersey's Reading First Program will demonstrate the effectiveness of scientific-based instructional strategies, assessments, and school management designs on a cross-section of urban and rural populations across the state.

We know that every child, regardless of income level or home environment, can learn to read by the end of third grade. Current research on exemplary high-poverty schools (Taylor et al., 1999), effective practices in reading (National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 1998), and successful teachers (Pressley, 1998; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley and Hampston, 1998), has identified characteristics of schools and classrooms that have made significant progress in helping students learn to read. Teachers across different states and local school districts have demonstrated that sound, scientifically based reading instruction can and does work with all children. New Jersey Reading First schools and classrooms will be expected to draw upon this research in implementing evidence-based practices that follow an instructional design that meets the needs of all students.

The following components highlight the evidence-based research practices that will be replicated in all New Jersey Reading First schools:

- Literacy-rich environment;
- Sufficient instructional time;
- Careful lesson planning;

- School-wide assessment system;
- School-wide interventions for struggling readers;
- Sound instructional approaches;
- School climate of collaboration, strong leadership, and evidence of commitment;
- High quality professional development; and
- School partnerships.

More precisely, effective reading instruction will require teachers to provide a program of direct, systematic instruction in all five essentials of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, spelling and writing, fluency, text comprehension, and vocabulary development. New Jersey's plan requires Reading First teachers to:

#### Phonemic Awareness Instruction:

- Provide explicit and systematic instruction focusing on only one or two phonemic awareness skills, such as segmenting and blending;
- Use systematic instructional assessments to inform instruction;
- Link sounds to letters as soon as possible.

#### Phonics and Word Study Instruction:

- Provide explicit, systematic phonics instruction that teaches a set of letter-sound relations;
- Provide explicit instruction in blending sounds to read words;
- Include practice in reading texts that are written for students to use their phonics knowledge to decode and read words;
- Give substantial practice for children to apply phonics as they spell words;
- Use systematic classroom-based instructional assessment to inform instruction.

#### Spelling and Writing Instruction:

- Provide explicit and systematic spelling instruction to reinforce and extend students' growing knowledge of reading;
- Provide opportunities for manipulating, categorizing, and examining the similarities and differences in words;
- Provide daily opportunities to increase writing accuracy and speed;
- Model various types of writing and help children to apply spelling and reading knowledge in purposeful writing;
- Integrate writing across the curriculum;
- Use systematic classroom-based instructional assessment to inform instruction.

#### Fluency Instruction:

- Provide opportunities for guided oral repeated reading that includes support and feedback from teachers, peers, and/of parents;
- Match reading texts and instruction to individual students;
- Apply systematic classroom-based instructional assessment to monitor student progress in both rate and accuracy.

#### Text Comprehension Instruction:

- Provide comprehension instruction before, during, and after reading narrative and expository texts;
- Explicitly explain, model, and teach comprehension strategies, such as previewing and summarizing text;
- Promote thinking and extended discourse by asking questions and encouraging student questions and discussions;
- Provide extended opportunities for English language learners to participate;
- Use systematic classroom-based instructional assessment to inform instruction.

#### Vocabulary Instruction:

- Provide opportunities for students to receive direct, explicit instruction in the meanings of words and in word learning strategies;
- Provide many opportunities for students to read in and out of school;
- Engage children in daily interactions that promote using new vocabulary in both oral and written language;
- Enrich and expand the vocabulary knowledge of English language learners;
- Actively involve students in making connections between concepts and words.

In addition to the five essential components of reading, it is critical that Reading First teachers address the features of effective instruction: grouping and maximizing student learning. To ensure that classrooms will change and teachers will be active facilitators of effective instruction and classroom management techniques, New Jersey's Reading First plan calls for the following:

#### Grouping Practices:

- Use small, same-ability groups, continually monitor student progress, and regroup to reflect students' knowledge and skills;
- Use flexible grouping that provides opportunities for students to be members of more than one group;
- Alternate grouping formats for different instructional purposes and to meet students' needs;
- When students experience difficulty, reteach knowledge and skills that have the highest impact on learning to read;
- Incorporate peer tutoring; pair students together (e.g., less proficient reader with a more proficient reader).

#### Maximizing Student Learning:

- Actively engage students;
- Reduce teacher talk, and vary presentation, format, and ways students can participate in instruction;
- Use an appropriate level of instructional materials;
- Adapt the pacing, content, and emphasis of instruction for individuals and groups of children, including English language learners and those having difficulty learning to read.

Research clearly states that struggling readers need the tools of good instruction to support their learning. It is particularly important that Reading First teachers understand and implement reading interventions for these students that are grounded in scientific research methods supported by the National Reading Panel (2000). Therefore, the following SBRR procedure is recommended for use with intervention programs:

Intervention Program Instruction:

- Provide targeted instruction three to five times per week;
- Group students into groups of 3-5 according to their instructional needs;
- Assure that additional instruction aligns to core reading instruction;
- Provide ongoing and systematic corrective feedback to students;
- Provide extended practice in the critical elements of reading instruction based on students' needs;
- Increase time for word study and build fluency to improve automatic word recognition and rate of reading;
- Use systematic classroom-based instructional assessment to document student growth and inform instruction.

According to research, "Some children, including those with special needs, may never learn to read unless they are taught in an explicit, systematic way by a knowledgeable teacher using a well-designed instructional approach that is adapted to their unique strengths and needs (National Research Council, 1998). Furthermore, students should be provided with many opportunities to practice skills with more support initially and less support as students become more proficient (Rosenshine, 1997; Simmons & Kameenui, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). New Jersey's Reading First plan supports these beliefs and the above-mentioned program of instruction.

Reading First classroom teachers must provide clear expectations for student reading achievement and clear strategies for monitoring progress. New Jersey's Reading First plan requires that schools provide early screening, diagnostic, and on-going classroom assessments to gauge student performance. As noted in *Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader* (US Department of Education, 1999), even first graders who have the greatest reading challenges can reach grade-level reading by the end of second grade with intensive, targeted intervention (Vellutino et al., 1996). New Jersey's state plan calls for districts to implement scientifically based programs of intervention that are fully aligned to the goals of Reading First. With the proper early interventions, experts have found that reading failure in the primary grades can be reduced to less than one in ten children (Vellutino et al., 1996; Torgeson et al., 1997; Foorman et al., 1998).

While promoting and supporting good teaching is at the heart of Reading First, the state recognizes that teachers will naturally have different, specific support needs. New Jersey's plan will dramatically increase support for teachers of reading and help remove obstacles that keep children from becoming successful readers. The ultimate goal is to ensure that teachers have all the necessary tools to provide coherent, skills-based reading instruction for all students, including second language learners and students at risk for being inappropriately referred to special education. Classroom instruction will ultimately change as teachers participate in highly effective professional development workshops that are ongoing and sustained.

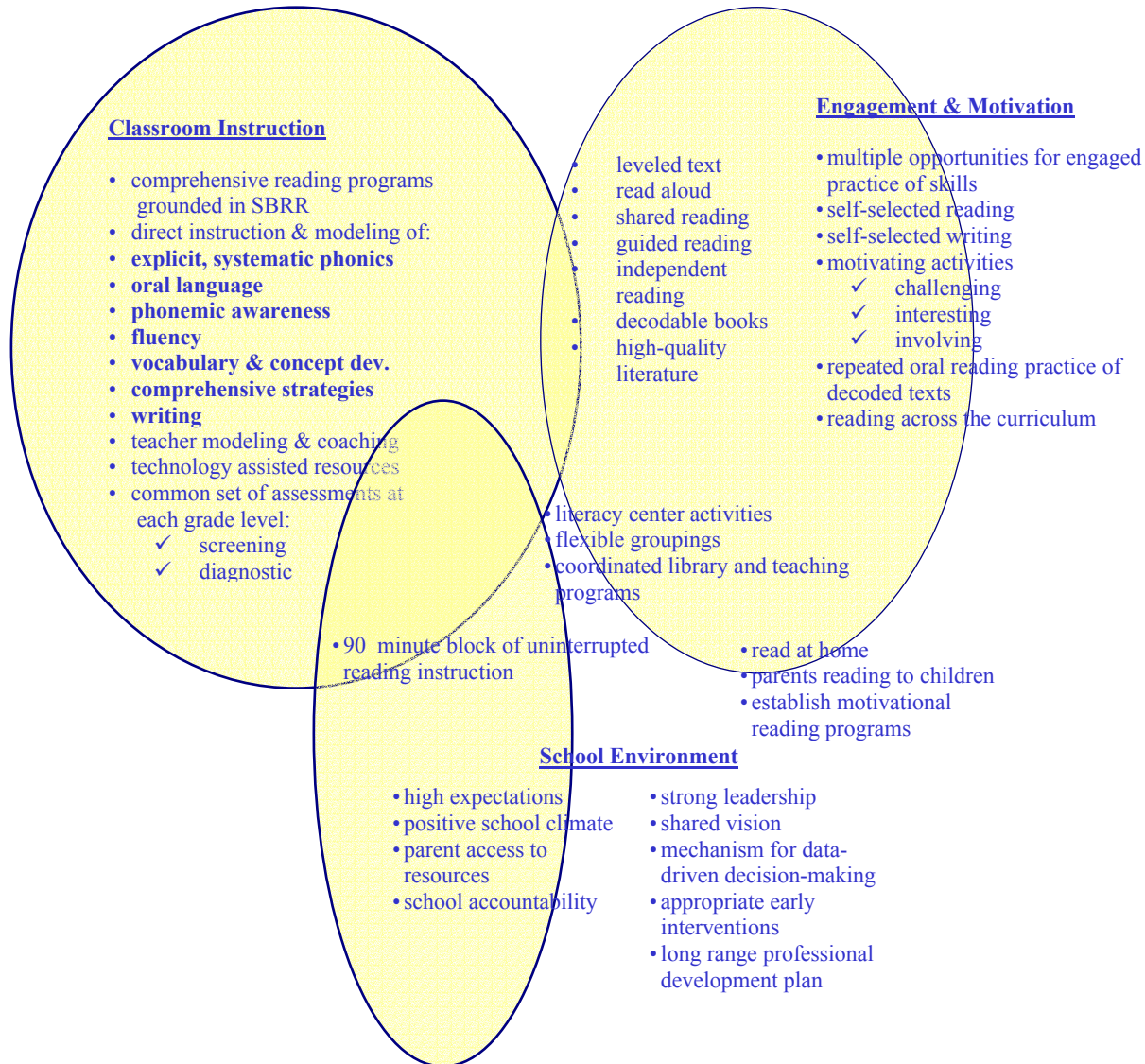
New Jersey's Reading First plan will result in classrooms with a protected, dedicated block of time for reading instruction of at least 90 minutes per day. Reading First appropriately concentrates attention on the classroom, and instructional time should reflect the most accurate and up-to-date knowledge about the science of teaching children how to read. Reading First teachers must deliver classroom instruction that is informed by scientifically based reading research. Small group instruction should be an integral part of classroom management and appropriate to individual student needs. Active student engagement in a variety of reading-based activities should support the five essential components of reading instruction, state and district academic goals, and the revised state reading standards and benchmarks in New Jersey's Language Arts Literacy Standards.

In the months ahead, the Department of Education will be developing a companion document to the revised standards to assist districts and classroom teachers, particularly primary teachers, with curriculum alignment and implementation. This document will act as a guide to infuse scientifically based reading and writing strategies into daily classroom activities and will fully support the goals for Reading First. When teachers feel empowered and free to take risks to implement alternative teaching strategies, classrooms will begin to reflect learning that is learner-centered, actively engaging to students, and addressing individual students' developmental and proficiency levels.

In summary, the following characteristics will be prominent features in all Reading First classrooms (see next page):

- Reading programs based on SBRR that includes instructional content based on the five essential components of reading;
- Coherent instructional design that includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities, and aligned student materials;
- Ongoing use of assessments that inform instructional decisions;
- Protected, dedicated block of time for reading instruction;
- Clear expectations for student achievement and clear strategies for monitoring progress;
- Small group instruction as appropriate to meet individual student needs; with placement and movement based on ongoing assessments;
- Active student engagement in a variety of reading-related activities, which are connected to the components of reading and academic goals;
- Instruction is designed to bring all children to grade level, with appropriate, scientifically based intervention strategies aligned with classroom instruction designed for students not making sufficient progress.

# New Jersey Reading First K-3 Instructional Design (School Level Design)



#### **4.B. COHERENCE OF THE READING FIRST PLAN**

*How will the SEA demonstrate that all activities are based on scientifically based reading research and integrated in a coherent manner?*

New Jersey's Reading First plan will strongly impact the quality of instruction in participating districts and schools, particularly in low achieving and high poverty schools. A significant impact on student achievement is anticipated in these schools, particularly those schools that have more than 75 percent of their students reading below grade level.

State goals for Reading First are strongly supported by Governor James E. McGreevey and his education cabinet, as well as all divisions of the New Jersey Department of Education. The department resource team (see Appendix D) has been highly instrumental in preparing this application and working on these efforts with liaisons to the Governor's Office. New Jersey is prepared to move forward with this ambitious plan and support scientifically based reading research methods, in order that all children can benefit from its instructional design.

New Jersey's large urban districts will especially benefit from the Reading First Program since some of their eligible schools already provide some form of structured reading models, with aligned professional development plans. In the existing school improvement plans mandated by the state in whole school reform, many schools are accustomed to setting benchmarks and achieving learning outcomes. These schools have the needed infrastructure required for Reading First plans to build momentum and sustainability over time, as they continue to increasingly provide the necessary components of scientifically based reading research. Reading First will dovetail with what some school districts already implement but with the expectation that student achievement will increase dramatically under the Reading First plan of action.

New Jersey does not currently require assessments in the primary grades, even though many of the more effective schools in the state are involved in this process. The Reading First Program and the "*No Child Left Behind Act*" (2001) further direct the state to seriously review, analyze, and provide focused state leadership and guidance to districts on required testing in grades 3-8. New Jersey's Reading First plan will enable LEAs to implement early screening and diagnostic assessments in K-3 that inform instruction and gauge student progress toward achieving learning outcomes.

The SEA Reading First staff in the Office of Early Literacy will provide the necessary leadership, expertise, and oversight needed to fully support this project. They will work with the Reading First Leadership Team, Higher Education Council, and Governor's Early Literacy Task Force, to ensure a cohesive, comprehensive early literacy effort that improves reading instruction for all students.

Nine highly trained content specialists, with full understanding of scientifically based reading research and the five components of reading will work together and with the schools to accomplish the goals of this grant. In addition, the Division of Educational Programs and Assessment will work collaboratively with the Office of Program Review and Improvement to utilize existing staff in order to accomplish these Reading First goals.



In summary, New Jersey's Reading First strategic plan will enable the state to successfully implement a blueprint for quality reading programs that is grounded in scientific research and the fundamental principles of effective instruction in the essential components of early literacy. The revised state standards (adopted by the State Board on July 2, 2002), particularly for K-4 reading, are clearly aligned to scientific-based reading research, the findings of the National Reading Panel (2000), and the National Research Council (1998) in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*.

New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards for reading (3.1) define what children should know and be able to do in the areas of: print concepts (print awareness), phonology (phonemic awareness), word recognition and decoding, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary and concept development. The standards document explicitly states that "phonics instruction should be explicit and systematic" (see [Appendix B](#)).

For the purposes of Reading First, the Department of Education will require all participating LEAs to align their K-3 reading programs with the grade level accomplishments developed by the National Research Council (1998) see [Appendix H](#). These accomplishments will be coded (\*) and referenced in the revised state language arts literacy standards, prior to dissemination to Chief School Administrators in September 2002. A companion teacher document (for Grades K-3) will be developed by the NJ Department of Education, in collaboration with the Higher Education Council, for the purposes of Reading First. This document will address evidence-based practices and provide examples of instructional approaches, content of instruction, and examples of grade level activities for the five essential components of reading. The Teacher Standards document will be used as a resource in professional development training, online assistance, and disseminated to all participating LEAs.

The Reading First state plan for professional development is rigorous and supports national research findings and the information compiled from the National Research Council (1998). This plan will provide the necessary targeted professional development for teachers and administrators in addressing the comprehension goals of this grant. New Jersey's Reading First three-tiered model supports the facilitation of long-term change in our districts, schools, and classrooms. The professional development plan fully supports districts, schools, teachers, and administrators and provides a permanent structure for building state, regional, and local capacity. State higher education partners are committed to the goals of Reading First, and have provided assurances to support scientifically based reading instruction in their institutions and preservice requirements.

The Reading First Program will require school districts to strategically target their state and federal resources toward the goal of having all children read on or above grade level. Reading First and all SEA staff will work closely to ensure a seamless transition to this new Reading First model of improved instruction. In addition, the Reading First plan will require that participating schools make strong connections to preschool programs and Early Reading First programs in their districts. The state will work with districts to assist them in coordinating all state and federal funding.

## CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the goal of New Jersey's Reading First program is to improve each child's capacity to become a successful reader. To that end, New Jersey is dedicated to improving classroom instruction by institutionalizing programs supported by scientifically based reading research. Increasing the capacity of teachers, schools, school districts, and communities to foster early reading programs that are evidence-based will ensure that every child learns to read by the end of third grade. Learning to read is the first, and most important step, towards a successful and productive future.

New Jersey's Reading First plan impacts classroom reading instruction by meeting individual LEAs and schools' targeted needs, and enables schools to fully integrate scientifically based reading research into all K-3 activities. The Reading First program will be expanded over the next six years to all schools and K-3 classrooms, and will provide a clear roadmap for reading instruction statewide. Individual school plans will demonstrate how Title I and related reading activities have been effectively incorporated into a comprehensive program design.

Participating Reading First schools (35 districts) will be required to demonstrate reading improvement by increasing scores 10 percent each year. Schools will be monitored using the new Third Grade State Assessment (Spring 2003) and annual standardized measures in K-2. Schools that do not demonstrate sufficient gains, as evidenced on statewide and standardized assessments, will receive increased professional development support and state technical assistance, and after three years, will be at risk for losing their Reading First federal funding.

Those schools that demonstrate significant reading gains will be awarded Reading First Certificates by the State Board of Education and highlighted by the NJ Department of Education. Successful reading programs will be promoted through the NJPEP web site, the NJDOE web site, state literacy organizations (e.g., NJ Reading Association), and ideas shared at state and regional conferences. Reading First schools will qualify to become professional development schools so that teachers and administrators can visit and observe exemplary classroom practices grounded in scientifically based reading research.

The Division of Educational Programs and Assessments will work closely with the Office of Early Childhood and Title I, so that all Reading First activities are coherent between preschool and K-3 literacy efforts. The Department of Education staff working with preschool programs will be invited to participate in all Reading First activities, both at the state, regional, and local levels. The Department will partner with the Higher Education Council to make recommendations and changes to the preservice requirements and inservice training for teachers and administrators in New Jersey.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Glossary of Terms**

**Abbott School District-** As defined by *N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-3* means one of New Jersey's 30 poor urban school districts. Twenty-eight districts were litigants in the original *Abbott v. Burke* funding case decided by the New Jersey Supreme Court on June 5, 1990 (119 *N.J.* 287, 394). Neptune and Plainfield were added in 1999 to bring the total to 30. The original 28 are as follows: Asbury Park City, Bridgeton City, Burlington City, Camden City, East Orange City, Elizabeth City, Garfield City, Gloucester City, Harrison Town, Hoboken City, Irvington Township, Jersey City, Keansburg Borough, Long Branch City, Millville City, New Brunswick City, Newark City, City of Orange Township, Passaic City, Paterson City, Pemberton Township, Perth Amboy City, Phillipsburg Town, Pleasantville City, Trenton City, Union City, Vineland City, and West New York Town. (from: A Glossary of Acronyms and Terms from the New Jersey Department of Education 2002)

**Achieve, Inc. -** Achieve, Inc., is an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit organization that helps states raise academic standards, measure performance against those standards, establish clear accountability for results and strengthen public confidence in our education system. (from: [www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/AboutUs?openform](http://www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/AboutUs?openform))

**Common Core Reading Program -** A comprehensive scientifically based reading program incorporating the five essential elements of reading.

**Education Law Center-** Education Law Center represents the plaintiff-class of over 300,000 school-age children and 54,000 preschoolers in the *Abbott v. Burke* case. These students and youngsters attend public school and preschool in 30 urban communities across New Jersey. In a series of landmark rulings in the *Abbott* case, the New Jersey Supreme Court has ordered the most comprehensive set of programs and reforms for the education of disadvantaged students anywhere in the nation.

(from: [www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/AbbottvBurke/AboutAbbott.htm](http://www.edlawcenter.org/ELCPublic/AbbottvBurke/AboutAbbott.htm))

**Eligible Local Educational Agency-** A local educational agency that is:

Among the local educational agencies in the State with the highest numbers or percentages of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data; and

The LEA has jurisdiction over at least one of the following:

A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone or an enterprise community under part I of subchapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under section 1116(b); or

The highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted under section 1124(c), in comparison to other local educational agencies in the State. (Guidance for the Reading First Program, US Dept. of Ed., OESE, April, 2002, p. 46)

**Essential Components of Reading Instruction-** Explicit and systematic instruction in:

**Phonemic awareness-** The ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds, or phonemes, in spoken words.

**Phonics-** The understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes, the sounds of spoken language, and graphemes, the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language.

**Vocabulary development-** Development of stored information about the meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. There are four types of vocabulary:

listening vocabulary- the words needed to understand what is heard

speaking vocabulary- the words used when speaking

reading vocabulary- the words needed to understand what is read

writing vocabulary- the words used in writing

**Reading fluency, including oral reading skills-** The ability to read text accurately and quickly.

**Reading comprehension strategies-** Strategies for understanding, remembering and communicating with others about what has been read. (Guidance for the Reading First Program, US Dept. of Ed., OESE, April, 2002, pp. 41-43, 46)

**Governor's Early Literacy Taskforce -** The Literacy Task Force is charged with identifying research-based programs, practices, and methods that can be incorporated into a statewide plan to improve early literacy. The Early Literacy Task Force, under the guidance of Commissioner of Education Dr. William Librera, is chaired by Dr. Dorothy Strickland of Rutgers University and Robert Copeland, Superintendent of the Piscataway School Districts.

**New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards-** Core Curriculum Content Standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996, and they establish expectations for students to meet in seven academic and five workplace readiness areas. They articulate the common expectations for student achievement throughout the 13 years of public education in the following subject areas: visual and performing arts, comprehensive health/physical education, language arts literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages. The five cross content areas for workplace readiness encompass career planning; use of technology information and other tools; critical thinking/decision-making/problem-solving; self-management; and safety principles. The standards are automatically reviewed every five years. (from: A Glossary of Acronyms and Terms from the New Jersey Department of Education 2002)

**New Jersey Department of Education's Material Review Committee** –A committee within the NJDOE charged with the review and approval of acceptable reading programs, assessment instruments, and data analysis systems for Reading First LEAs.

**New Jersey Professional Education Port (NJPEP)-** A professional development site that supports teachers and the entire New Jersey educational community in the understanding and implementation of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and their related statewide assessments.

**Professional Development Provider-** A provider of professional development in reading instruction to teachers, including special education teachers, that is based on scientifically based reading research. (Guidance for the Reading First Program, US Dept. of Ed., OESE, April, 2002, p. 46)

**Professional Development Schools-** Collaborative school/university/community partnerships focused on improving the education of practicing and prospective teachers; strengthening knowledge and practice in teaching; and enhancing the profession by serving as models of school/university collaboration. These partnerships address student learning problems, shared teaching, collaborative research on the problems of educational practice, and cooperative supervision. (from: A Glossary of Acronyms and Terms from the New Jersey Department of Education 2002)

**Professional Improvement Regional Center (PIRC)-** Program Improvement Regional Centers includes three regional centers — north, central, and south -- that are staffed by School Review and Improvement Teams (SRIs). Teams are established pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6:10A-1.4* and with the developers and experts identified by the Department of Education. These PIRC teams additionally serve as liaisons between schools and the Department of Education and as sources of technical assistance in programmatic and fiscal areas. (from: A Glossary of Acronyms and Terms from the New Jersey Department of Education 2002)

**Reading Coach-** The Reading Coach will assist teachers and administrators with plans aimed at raising the reading performance of students in schools that have had more than 15% of their students performing at the “partially proficient” level on the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA). Coaches will lead training experiences for staff at targeted schools. They will also provide staff with support for the implementation of research-based practices, teach demonstration lessons, and coordinate professional development activities throughout the state. (New Jersey Department of Education, Program Description: Reading Coaches, Early Literacy Initiative, May, 2002)

**Reading First Leadership Team (Reading First Partnership)-** The Reading First Leadership Team, created in consultation with the Governor and the New Jersey Department of Education, will monitor and examine the scientific base for instruction in schools that need to improve reading instruction. This reading team will ensure a seamless, complementary approach to reading achievement throughout the State. (Guidance for the Reading First Program, US Dept. of Ed., OESE, April, 2002, p. 46)

**RMC Regional Research Lab -** RMC Research Corporation, is a company based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire that supports clients who serve learners, schools, families, and communities. (from: [www.rmccres.com](http://www.rmccres.com))

**School Literacy Team (SLT)** – A team of educators (principal, reading coach, and Reading First coordinator) that will work to insure the smooth implementation of the Reading First program at the school site. The SLT, along with the school Steering Committee, will provide oversight into the planning, implementation, and progress reporting of the school-based Reading First program.

**School Review and Improvement (SRI) Team-** School Review and Improvement Team consists of Department of Education staff members assigned to work with Abbott districts to implement the New Jersey Supreme Court decisions pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:24-1.3*. (from: A Glossary of Acronyms and Terms from the New Jersey Department of Education 2002)

**State Education Agency (SEA)-** Refers to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

**School Management Team-** A School Management Team, required by *N.J.A.C. 6:19A-1.4*, is the building-based planning and decision-making entity. The SMT consists of the building principal and representatives of parents, teachers, and the community, as well as any other persons that will enable the team to implement a sound school-based program. The work of the SMT primarily involves the development of a whole school reform implementation plan (*N.J.A.C. 6:19A-3.2*). (from: A Glossary of Acronyms and Terms from the New Jersey Department of Education 2002)

**Scientifically Based Reading Research-** Research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

- a. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- b. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypothesis and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- c. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations;
- d. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review. (Guidance for the Reading First Program, US Dept. of Ed., OESE, April, 2002, p. 47)

### **Screening, Diagnostic and Classroom-Based Instructional Reading Assessments-**

**Screening Reading Assessment-** An assessment that is valid, reliable and based on scientifically based reading research. It is a brief procedure designed as a first step in identifying children who may be at high risk for delayed development or academic failure and in need of further diagnosis of their need for special services or additional reading instruction.



**Diagnostic Reading Assessment-** An assessment that is valid, reliable and based on scientifically based reading research. It is used for the following purposes:

- i. identifying a child's specific areas of strengths and weaknesses so that the child has learned to read by the end of grade 3
- ii. determining any difficulties that a child may have in learning to read and the potential cause of such difficulties
- iii. helping to determine possible reading intervention strategies and related special needs

**Classroom-Based Instructional Reading Assessment-** An assessment that evaluates children's learning based on systematic observations by teachers of children performing academic tasks that are part of their daily classroom experience and is used to improve in reading, including classroom instruction. (Guidance for the Reading First Program, US Dept. of Ed., OESE, April, 2002, pp. 47-48).

## Press Releases

**For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:**

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## FACT SHEET

July 2, 2002

### **Language Arts Literacy**

*Revised standards in Language Arts Literacy were influenced by Governor James E. McGreevey's commitment to early childhood literacy and from recommendations from organizations such as the National Reading Panel. The standards also contain more specific direction for reading and writing in grades K-4.*

#### **Summary**

The revised standards for language arts literacy recognize the primary grades as building blocks that lay the foundation for learning and skill development so that each succeeding grade builds on the foundation achieved by all students in their efforts to become fluent readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers. As language arts skills spiral and become increasingly sophisticated, students progress through the grades with increased confidence and proficiency in oral and written language, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Language skills are essential to furthering learning, communication, career development, and the human spirit.

#### **State Reading Goal**

A primary state goal for reading, and cornerstone of Governor McGreevey's education reform initiative, is that "Students will read well and independently by the end of the third grade." As a result of this commitment, the language arts committee has placed a strong emphasis on developing performance benchmarks in grades K-12 that reflect both a state and national perspective on reading achievement.

A set of 15 beliefs about students, teaching, and the language arts learning process were established as the underlying framework for standards revisions. The revised standards list the beliefs.

#### **Recommendations Incorporated In Standards**

The language arts standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996 and the revised standards continue to be aligned with national standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. Achieve, Inc., reviewed New Jersey's 1996 standards in language arts literacy and provided recommendations for improvement. They suggested that the standards provide more clarity and specificity by including benchmarking at more grade levels. In addition, New Jersey standards should reflect sufficient rigor and complexity from grade level to grade level. Achieve recommended that attention be given to the primary grades and integration of phonics instruction in the context of meaningful reading and writing tasks. Achieve's recommendations are reflected in the revised standards.

The revised standards are also influenced by the research of the National Reading Panel (2000). There are five dimensions in early reading, plus a child's motivation to read, that must be

developed so that young students become proficient readers. A comprehensive and balanced elementary literacy program should include the following areas:

- Phonemic awareness;
- Explicit and systematic phonics;
- Reading fluency;
- Reading comprehension;
- Vocabulary development; and
- Individual child's motivation.

**APPENDIX B**  
**NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS**  
**FOR**  
**LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**  
**(Revised 2002)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Vision**

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for language arts literacy capture language experiences all children need in order to grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally in classrooms across the curriculum. The standards are intended to promote students' capacities to construct meaning in any arena, with others as well as on their own. If students learn to read, write, speak, listen, and view critically, strategically, and creatively, and if they learn to use these arts individually and with others, they will have the literacy skills they need to discover personal and shared meaning throughout their lives.

The language arts are integrative, interactive ways of communicating that develop through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. They are the means through which one is able

to receive information; think logically and creatively; express ideas; understand and participate meaningfully in spoken, written, and nonverbal communications; formulate and answer questions; and search for, organize, evaluate, and apply information. Literacy is a way to acquire knowledge for thinking and communicating; it is more than the acquisition of a specific, predetermined set of skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Literacy is also recognizing and understanding one's own purposes for thinking and communicating (through print or nonprint, verbal or nonverbal means) and being able to use one's own resources to achieve those purposes.

Underlying the standards for language arts literacy are four assumptions about language learning. First, language is an active process for constructing meaning. Even the quiet listener is actively working to link prior knowledge and understanding to what other people say. Second, language develops in a social context. While language is used in private activities, the use of language almost always relates to others. Each of us is an active audience for those who create spoken, written, or visual texts; others listen to our thoughts and read our writing. Third, language ability increases in complexity if language is used in increasingly complex ways. Language learners must engage in texts and conversations that are rich in ideas and increasingly complex in the patterns of language they display. Finally, learners achieve mastery of language arts literacy not by adding skills one-by-one to their repertoire, but rather by using and exploring language in its many dimensions.

The language arts literacy standards are intended to support the learning of all students through challenging activities that bring students to higher levels of performance. Although the standards define five areas of language arts, each art is not a set of discrete skills but meant to work together to inform and enrich each other. The language arts are interdependent processes that often merge in an integrated act of rehearsal, reflection, and learning. The division of language arts into separate standards and lettered strands is merely a method that allows us to highlight the special features of each and to identify developmentally appropriate skills and behaviors among language arts learners. The separation is not meant to suggest hierarchical order or any linear or sequential approach to literacy instruction. The standards are not intended to be a curriculum guide but should be used as a catalyst for curriculum alignment and renewal. They are the foundation for the universal thinking skills and strategies that enable all learners to contribute effectively to a global society.

The standards represent the importance of language arts to learning in two distinct but complementary ways. On the one hand, students develop the skills they will carry with them into adulthood as contributing members of society: critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. On the other hand, students discover the inner joy and self-illumination that come with reading great literature and communicating through speech and writing. The two views are complementary; in striving for the goals of one, the goals of the other are fostered.

### **State Reading Goal**

A primary state goal for reading, and cornerstone of Governor McGreevey's education reform initiative, is that **"Students will read well and independently by the end of the third grade."** In order to accomplish this goal, the language arts committee has placed a strong emphasis on developing performance benchmarks in grades K-12 that reflect both a state and national perspective on reading achievement. Teachers and parents can assist students in achieving these

proficiencies by recognizing that learning extends beyond the classroom door to everyday experiences related to self, others, and the world.

The following set of beliefs about students, teaching, and the language arts learning process were established as the underlying framework for standards revisions. A “balanced approach” to instruction is essential in all language arts programs and classrooms should provide students with:

- Differentiated instructional strategies to address individual learning styles;
- Exposure to and experience with **many literary genres** through reaction, reflection, and introspection;
- **Instructional skills and strategies (including direct and explicit instruction, modeling of skills/strategies for students, and opportunities for students to be a teacher to others) that ready students to become competent readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers;**
- Instruction delivered in meaningful contexts so that students preserve the learning for future use or transfer to other learning;
- “Active learning” in which students are engaged in active questioning, active listening, authentic activities, and the learning process;
- **Explicit teaching of skills** as a means of supporting mastery of standard English conventions, comprehension strategies, and communication skills;
- Acquisition of reading and literacy skills in all content areas to support learning;
- Development **of self-help strategies** that are practiced across all disciplines;
- Connections to prior knowledge as a necessary component of new learning and retention;
- **Learning that is meaningful;** giving students choices (empowerment), and providing them with parameters that lead to ownership and responsibility for their learning;
- **Immersion in reading,** writing, listening, speaking, and viewing strands that leads to deeper and wider understanding;
- Use of textual resources, especially those linked to current technologies, as an integral part of a language arts literacy program;
- Experiences using technology as a tool for learning, especially as it applies to research and data retrieval;
- Time to reflect on their work as an important part of the learning process; and
- **Activities encouraging problem-solving and inquiry skills** as critical attributes to learning.

The language arts classroom should be purposeful, stimulating to the senses, and engaging for all types of learners, including varied activities for the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Classroom organization should include some form of team and partner work and provide an environment that is responsive to students’ personal and academic goals.

Brain-based research clearly shows implications for student learning when there are links to the arts, like classical music, and the real world. For example, by having young children recite the alphabet with a song enables the learner to remember and retain the information longer.

Language arts classrooms should be alive with authentic learning opportunities that motivate and incorporate the arts.

### **Revised Standards**

The language arts standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996 and the revised standards continue to be aligned with national standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. Achieve, Inc., reviewed New Jersey's 1996 standards in language arts literacy and provided recommendations for improvement. They suggested that the standards provide more clarity and specificity by including benchmarking at more grade levels. In addition, New Jersey standards should reflect sufficient rigor and complexity from grade level to grade level. Achieve recommended that attention be given to the primary grades and integration of phonics instruction in the context of meaningful reading and writing tasks. Achieve's recommendations are reflected in the revised standards.

**The revised standards are also influenced by the research of the National Reading Panel (1998).** There are six dimensions in early reading that must be developed so that young students become proficient readers. A comprehensive and balanced elementary literacy program should include the following areas:

- **Phonemic awareness;**
- **Explicit and systematic phonics;**
- **Reading fluency;**
- **Reading comprehension;**
- **Vocabulary development; and**
- **Individual child's motivation.**

The reading standard (3.1) incorporates these literacy components throughout the grades and takes into consideration individual differences and student motivation. Specific to reading, speaking, and listening standards are oral language, decoding, comprehension, vocabulary development, and phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness, a child's ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words, contributes to early, emergent reading development. Since phonemic awareness is mastered by most students prior to the third grade, these skills are included only at the K-2 grade level. With regard to phonics, even though there are different approaches to teaching phonics, the literature states that comprehensive phonics programs should include explicit and systematic instruction. Phonics programs should provide ample opportunities for children to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences, and stories. Good instruction in the early grades includes providing students with a variety of literary genres, including decodable books that contain specific letter-sound words they are learning (National Institute for Literacy, 2001). Hence, students understand that there is a predictable relationship between sounds and letters in spoken and written language, and in the language found in their favorite books.

The expectation for reading at all grade levels is that students will read widely. It is important for all students, including students with disabilities and second language learners, to have

opportunities to participate in read-alouds, shared and individual reading of high quality materials. Guided repeated oral reading is an effective way of helping students to improve their comprehension and fluency skills. Many studies have found that students who become fluent readers read a great deal (National Reading Panel, 2000). Good readers read and comprehend text using similar strategies. Some effective strategies used by good readers at all grade levels include:

- Drawing from prior knowledge to make meaning from print;
- Creating visual images in one's mind to enhance understanding;
- Monitoring one's own reading and checking for understanding;
- Asking questions to identify key points in text and remembering them;
- Making conscious inferences about important information presented;
- Synthesizing new information with existing understanding about topic;
- Summarizing and understanding how different parts of text are related; and
- Evaluating and forming opinions about ideas presented.

In the language arts classroom, the role of writing is an integral part of reading instruction and offers a means for readers to extend and clarify their ideas. Students need many opportunities to write each day. Through writing workshops, students learn specific writing strategies and produce their own authentic writings. It is important that students at all grade levels write a range of pieces, including narrative, persuasive, informational, fiction, and poetry. In addition, there should be a seamless integration of word processing activities into a program of reading and writing instruction. Technology can be used as an effective tool for literacy tasks, and can facilitate reading comprehension and assist in areas like vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, and word processing.

## **Standards and Strands**

There are five language arts literacy standards, each of which has lettered strands and learning expectations for individual grades (K-4) and small grade-level clusters (5-6, 7-8, 9-12). The standards and strands are outlined below:

### **3.1 Reading**

- A. Concepts About Print**
- B. Phonological Awareness**
- C. Decoding and Word Recognition**
- D. Fluency**
- E. Reading Strategies (before, during, and after reading)**
- F. Vocabulary and Concept Development**
- G. Comprehension Skills and Response to Text**
- H. Inquiry and Research**

### **3.2 Writing**

- A. Writing as a Process
- B. Writing as a Product
- C. Mechanics, Spelling, and Handwriting
- D. Writing Forms, Audiences, and Purposes

### 3.3 Speaking

- A. Discussion
- B. Questioning (Inquiry) and Contributing
- C. Word Choice
- D. Oral Presentation

### 3.4 Listening

- A. Active Listening
- B. Listening Comprehension

### 3.5 Viewing and Media Literacy

- A. Constructing Meaning
- B. Visual and Verbal Messages
- C. Living with Media

Governor McGreevey's Executive Order No. 8 on Literacy Standards Task Force (February 25, 2002) requires the Department of Education to develop literacy standards in grades 2, 3, and 4. This mandate supports the development of individual grade-level indicators in kindergarten through fourth grade for all five language arts, in order to close the literacy achievement gap for all New Jersey students and address the federal requirement for testing in grades 3-8. The new third grade assessment, as well as future state-selected tests, will be aligned with the revised language arts literacy standards.

The early elementary school experiences are critical to school success. Five-year-olds enter school with a wide range of abilities, motivation to learn, and preschool and home literacy experiences. It is understood that some schools continue to provide half-day kindergartens, while others provide full-day programs for children. Half-day kindergarten programs should make every effort to address the prescribed grade-level expectations outlined in this document. It may be necessary for administrators to review their existing kindergarten schedule, program, staff needs, or classroom materials in order for all students to achieve these standards.

## Summary

The revised standards for language arts literacy, along with the vision statement, offer a framework for classroom instruction and curriculum development in our schools. While this is a powerful challenge to students, teachers, principals, and parents, it can be met through a united commitment. The singular goal of increasing student achievement through effective instruction in the skills required to live and work in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global community is the driving force of this challenge and these standards. **The primary grades are building blocks that lay the foundation for learning and skill development so that each succeeding grade builds on the**



**foundation achieved by each student in their effort to become fluent readers,** writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers. As language arts skills spiral and become increasingly sophisticated, students progress through the grades with increased confidence and proficiency in oral and written language, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Language skills are essential to furthering learning, communication, career development, and the human spirit.

## **Resources**

The language arts literacy committee would like to thank and acknowledge the following states for providing standards documents to assist in our standards revisions:

Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework: Prepublication Draft, November 2000.

California English Language Arts Content Standards for Public Schools, California Department of Education, 1998.

Texas Language Arts Standards, Texas Department of Education, 1998.

Maryland Reading Standards, and Standards for Instructional Content in English Language Arts, K-12, July 1999, Maryland State Department of Education

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1999.

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Directory of Test Specifications in Language Arts Literacy, New Jersey Department of Education, February 1998.

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Keene, E. & Zimmerman, S. (1997). Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop., Heineman Books

National Reading Panel (2000) Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read. Reports of the Subgroup. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

New Standards Performance Standards, English Language Arts, National Center on Education and the Economy and the University of Pittsburgh, 1997.

Ray, Katie Wood (1999). Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom, National Council of Teachers of English.

Reutzel, D. & Cooter, R. (2000). Teaching Children to Read: Putting the Pieces Together. Third Edition. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

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**STANDARD 3.1 (READING) ALL STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND AND APPLY THE KNOWLEDGE OF SOUNDS, LETTERS, AND WORDS IN WRITTEN ENGLISH TO BECOME INDEPENDENT AND FLUENT READERS, AND WILL READ A VARIETY OF MATERIALS AND TEXTS WITH FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION.**

**Descriptive Statement:** A primary reading goal is for students at all grades to read independently with fluency and comprehension, in an effort to become lifelong readers and learners. In order to achieve this goal, students benefit from “daily opportunities to read books they choose for themselves, for their own purposes, and their own pleasures” (Calkins, 2001). Students should read grade-appropriate or more challenging classic and contemporary literature and informational readings, both self-selected and assigned. In order to grow as readers and deepen their understanding of texts, students need many opportunities to think about, talk about, and write about the texts they are reading. A diversity of reading material (including fiction and nonfiction) provides students with opportunities to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially as they consider universal themes, diverse cultures and perspectives, and the common aspects of human existence.

In early reading instruction, children need to know about sounds, letters and words, and their relationships. Phonemic awareness, knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters, and an understanding of the features of written English texts are essential to beginning reading. **Direct, systematic phonics instruction enables many students to grasp a knowledge of phonics, and provides a bridge to apply this knowledge in becoming independent and fluent readers. Systematic phonics instruction typically involves explicitly teaching students a pre-specified set of letter-sound relations and having students read text that provides practice using these relations to decode words (National Reading Panel, 2000).** It is important to help students become fluent readers in the early years, and then help them expand their literacy abilities as they progress through the middle and high school grades.

The reading process requires readers to respond to texts, both personally and critically, and relate prior knowledge and personal experiences to written texts. Students apply literal, inferential and critical comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading to examine, construct, and extend meaning. In becoming fluent readers, students must draw on the word meaning and sentence structure of text and sound/symbol relationships, and use these cueing systems interchangeably in order to gain meaning. Students need to recognize that what they hear, speak, write, and view contributes to the content and quality of their reading experiences.

### Cumulative Progress Indicators

**By the end of Kindergarten, students will:**

#### **A. Concepts About Print**

1. Realize that speech can be recorded in words (e.g., his/her own name; words and symbols in the environment).
2. Distinguish letters from words.
3. Recognize that words are separated by spaces.

4. Follow words left to right and from top to bottom.
5. Recognize that print represents spoken language.
6. Demonstrate understanding of the function of a book and its parts, including front and back and title page.

**B. Phonological Awareness (oral language activities)**

1. Demonstrate understanding that spoken words consist of sequences of phonemes.
2. Demonstrate phonemic awareness by rhyming, clapping syllables, and substituting sounds.
3. Understand that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds (phonemes) in a spoken word (alphabetic principle).
4. Learn many, though not all, one-to-one letter sound correspondences.
5. Given a spoken word, can produce another word that rhymes with it.

**C. Decoding and Word Recognition**

1. Recognize some words by sight.
2. Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet.
3. Recognize and read their name.

**D. Fluency**

1. Practice reading behaviors such as retelling, reenacting, or dramatizing stories.
2. Recognize when a simple text fails to make sense when listening to a story read aloud.
3. Attempt to follow along in their book while listening to a story read aloud.
4. Listen and respond attentively to literary texts (e.g., nursery rhymes) and functional texts (e.g., science books).

**E. Reading Strategies (before, during, and after reading)**

1. Begin to track or follow print when listening to a familiar text being read.
2. Think ahead and make simple predictions about text.
3. Use picture clues to aid understanding of story content.
4. Relate personal experiences to story characters' experiences, language, customs, and cultures with assistance from teacher.
5. "Reads" familiar texts emergently, not necessarily verbatim from the print alone.

**F. Vocabulary and Concept Development**

1. Continue to develop a vocabulary through meaningful, concrete experiences.
2. Identify and sort words in basic categories.
3. Explain meanings of common signs and symbols.

**G. Comprehension Skills and Response to Text**

1. Respond to a variety of poems and stories through movement, art, music, and drama.
2. Verbally identify the main character, setting, and important events in a story read aloud.
3. Identify favorite books and stories.
4. Retell a story read aloud using main characters and events.
5. Participate in shared reading experiences.

**H. Inquiry and Research**

1. Locate and know the purposes for various literacy areas of the classroom and the library/media center.

2. Choose books related to topics of interest.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of **Grade One**, students will:

**A. Concepts About Print**

1. Match oral words to printed words (e.g., pointing to print as one reads).
2. Practice reading print in the environment at school and at home with assistance.
3. Locate and identify the title, author, and illustrator of a book or reading selection.
4. Interpret simple graphs, charts, and diagrams

**B. Phonological Awareness (oral language activities)**

1. Demonstrate understanding of all sound- symbol relationships.
2. Blend or segment the phonemes of most one-syllable words.
3. Listen and identify the number of syllables in a word.
4. Merge spoken segments into a word.
5. Add, delete, or change sounds to change words (e.g., cow to how, cat to can).

**C. Decoding and Word Recognition**

1. Identify all consonant sounds in spoken words (including blends such as bl, br; and digraphs such as th, wh,).
2. Recognize and use rhyming words to reinforce decoding skills.
3. Decode regular one-syllable words and nonsense words (e.g., sit, zot).
4. Use sound-letter correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text.
5. Recognize high frequency words in and out of context.
6. Decode unknown words using basic phonetic analysis.
7. Decode unknown words using context clues.

**D. Fluency**

1. Answer questions correctly that are posed about stories read.
2. Begin to read simple text with fluency.
3. Read with fluency both fiction and nonfiction that is grade-level appropriate.

**E. Reading Strategies (before, during, and after reading)**

1. Use prior knowledge to make sense of text.
2. Establish a purpose for reading and adjust their reading rate.
3. Use pictures as cues to check for meaning.
4. Check to see if what is being read makes sense.
5. Monitor their reading by using fix-up strategies (e.g., searching for clues).
6. Use graphic organizers to build on experiences and extend learning.
7. Begin to apply study skills strategies (e.g., survey, question, read) to assist with retention and new learning.

**F. Vocabulary and Concept Development**

1. Develop a vocabulary of 300-500 high-frequency sight words and phonetically-regular words.

2. Use and explain common antonyms and synonyms.
3. Comprehends common and/or specific vocabulary in informational texts and literature.

#### **G. Comprehension Skills and Response to Text**

1. Draw simple conclusions from information gathered from pictures, print, and people.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with genres of text, including storybooks, expository texts, poetry, and newspapers.
3. Sequence information learned from text into a logical order to retell facts.
4. Identify, describe, compare, and contrast the elements of plot, setting, and characters.
5. Make simple inferences.
6. Read regularly in independent-level materials
7. Engage in silent independent reading for specific purposes.

#### **H. Inquiry and Research**

1. Ask and explore questions related to a topic of interest.
2. Draw conclusions from information and data gathered.
3. Read a variety of fiction and nonfiction, and produce evidence of reading.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of **Grade Two**, students will:

#### **A. Concepts About Print/Text**

1. Use titles, tables of contents, and chapter headings to locate information.
2. Recognize the purpose of a paragraph.

#### **B. Phonological Awareness**

1. Add, delete, or change middle sounds to change words (e.g., pat to put).
2. Use knowledge of print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.

#### **C. Decoding and Word Recognition**

1. Look for known chunks or small words to attempt to decode an unknown word.
2. Reread inserting the beginning sound of the unknown word.
3. Decode regular multisyllable words and nonsense words (e.g., capital, Kalamazoo).
4. Read many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common endings.

#### **D. Fluency**

1. Pause at appropriate end points (e.g., comma, period).
2. Use appropriate pace; not choppy or word –by- word.
3. Use appropriate inflection for dialogue, exclamations, etc.
4. Read internally without finger or lip movement.
5. Self-monitor when text does not make sense.
6. Use more than one strategy to determine if text makes sense.
7. Employ earlier strategies without being prompted.

#### **E. Reading Strategies (before, during, and after reading)**

1. Skip difficult words in an effort to read on and determine meaning.
2. Return to the beginning of a sentence and try again.

**F. Vocabulary and Concept Development**

1. Develop a vocabulary of 500-800 regular and irregular sight words.
2. Know and relate meanings of simple prefixes and suffixes.
3. Demonstrate evidence of expanding language repertory.
4. Understand concept of antonyms and synonyms.

**G. Comprehension Skills and Response to Text**

1. Demonstrate ability to recall facts and details of text.
2. Recognize cause and effect in texts.
3. Make inferences and support with textual information.
4. Continue to identify story elements in texts.
5. Respond to text by using how, why, and what-if questions.

**H. Inquiry and Research**

1. Locate information using alphabetical order.
2. Read a variety of nonfiction and fiction books and produce evidence of reading.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of **Grade 3**, students will:

**A. Concepts About Print/Text**

1. Recognize that printed materials provide specific information.
2. Recognize purposes for print conventions such as end-sentence punctuation, paragraphing, and boldprint.
3. Use a glossary or index to locate information in a text.

**B. Phonological Awareness**

No additional indicators at this grade level

**C. Decoding and Word Recognition**

1. Know sounds for a range of prefixes and suffixes (e.g., re-, ex-, -ment, -tion).
2. Use letter-sound knowledge and structural analysis to decode words.
3. Use context to accurately read words with more than one pronunciation.

**D. Fluency**

1. Recognize grade-level words accurately, quickly, and with ease so that a text sounds like spoken language when read aloud.
2. Read longer text and chapter books independently and silently.
3. Read aloud with fluency and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for grade level.

**E. Reading Strategies (before, during, after reading)**

1. Set purpose for reading and check to verify or change predictions during/after reading.
2. Monitor comprehension and accuracy while reading in context and self-correct errors.
3. Use pictures and context clues to assist with decoding of new words.
4. Use graphic organizers to build on experiences and extend learning.

**F. Vocabulary and Concept Development**

1. Spell previously studied words and spelling patterns accurately.
2. Point to or clearly identify specific words or wording that are causing comprehension difficulties.
3. Infer word meanings from taught roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

**G. Comprehension Skills and Response to Text**

1. Recognize purpose of the text.
2. Distinguish cause/effect, fact/opinion, main idea/supporting details in interpreting texts.
3. Interpret information in graphs, charts, and diagrams.
4. Ask how, why, and what-if questions in interpreting nonfiction texts.
5. Discuss underlying theme or message in interpreting fiction.
6. Summarize major points from fiction and nonfiction texts.
7. Draw conclusions and inferences from texts.
8. Recognize first-person “I” point of view.
9. Compare and contrast story plots, characters, settings, and themes.
10. Participate in creative responses to texts (e.g., dramatizations, oral presentations).
11. Read regularly in materials appropriate for their independent reading level.

**H. Inquiry and Research**

1. Use library classification systems, print or electronic, to locate information.
2. Draw conclusions from information and data gathered.
3. Read a variety of nonfiction and fiction books and produce evidence of understanding.



**APPENDIX C**  
**New Jersey's Reading First Leadership Team**

- Governor James E. McGreevey, State of New Jersey
- Dr. William E. Librera, Commissioner of Education
- Richard Ten Eyck, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Educational Programs and Assessment, New Jersey Department of Education
- Shirley K. Turner, State Senator, District 15, Co-Chair, Senate Education Committee
- Robert J. Martin, State Senator, District 26, Co-Chair, Senate Education Committee
- Joseph Doria, State Assembly, District 31, Chair, Assembly Education Committee
- Stanley A. Craig, District 28, Vice Chair, Assembly Education Committee
- Lucille Davy, Special Counsel to the Governor for Education
- Dorothy Strickland, Co-Chair, Governor's Early Literacy Taskforce
- Robert Copeland, Co-Chair, Governor's Early Literacy Taskforce
- Ann Lawrence, Director, Office of Early Literacy, New Jersey Department of Education
- New Jersey Network Public Broadcasting,
- Jay Doolan, Director, Office of Academic and Professional Standards, New Jersey Department of Education
- Mary Louise Hyman, President, New Jersey Association of Kindergarten Educators
- Carmina Rodriguez-Villa, Principal, Joseph M. Ferraina Early Childhood Learning Center, Long Branch
- Louise C. Wilkinson, Dean, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- Larry Leverett, Superintendent, Plainfield Public Schools
- Morton Sherman, Superintendent, Cherry Hill Public Schools
- Adele Macula, Associate Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction, Jersey City Public Schools

- Donna Kortvalesy, Supervisor, Professional Development, Millville Public Schools
- Diamond Navarro, Principal, Boylan School, Newark
- Ms. Jackie Onifer, Director, Early Childhood Education, Asbury Park School District
- Linnea Weiland, Director, Curriculum & Instruction, Plainfield Public Schools
- Steve Heller, Education Consultant, Verizon Incorporated, Newark
- Linda Katz, Children's Literacy Initiative, Philadelphia, PA
- Lesley Morrow, Professor, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- Pat Carroll, Assistant Superintendent, Clearview Regional School District
- Nancy Reid, Director, Office of Program Review and Implementation, New Jersey Department of Education
- Barbara Gantwerk, Director, Office of Special Education, New Jersey Department of Education
- Jean Voorhees, Language Arts Literacy Coordinator, Office of Academic and Professional Standards
- Linda Dold-Collins, Director, Office of Title I Programs, New Jersey Department of Education
- Dorothy Atkins, Program Specialist, NJPEP, New Jersey Department of Education
- Raquel Sinai, Manager, Office of Special Populations, New Jersey Department of Education
- Diane Kubinski, Coordinator, Office of Assessment, New Jersey Department of Education

## **APPENDIX D**

### **New Jersey Department of Education Reading Resource Committee**

**Carol Albritton** has 20 years of experience as a high school English teacher. She has served as director of service learning programs in K-12 and at the Institute for Service Learning at Philadelphia University. She has served as project coordinator of a national whole school reform program at Temple University. Currently, she works at the NJDOE in planning and design related to the implementation of school reform in high poverty districts in the state.

**Dorothy Atkins** is an education program specialist with the New Jersey Professional Education Port (NJPEP), an educational support website for teachers, administrators, parents and students. NJPEP is a unit in the Division of Educational Programs and Assessment within the NJDOE. Ms. Atkins has taught students Pre-K through middle school and adults in public, charter, and private school settings. Her responsibilities have included being a grade-level chairperson for grades K, 3, and 5, teacher mentor, chairperson for a school-based management team, member of curriculum development groups, and a workshop presenter. Her experiences with language arts literacy have included teaching reading and language arts in elementary and middle school grades and with adults, developing an early literacy web page, and attending the USDOE Reading First Grant Writing workshop in Washington, D.C. Ms. Atkins has a B.S. in Elementary Education, M.A. in Early Childhood Education, and has taken graduate courses in educational administration and policy analysis.

**Shannon Ayers-Reilly** is an early literacy coordinator for New Jersey's literacy initiative. She recently was an instructor in Early Childhood at Rider University. She earned her doctorate from Penn State University in educational psychology with an emphasis on literacy and early childhood. She has been a kindergarten teacher as well as a reading specialist.

**Jami Fair-Davis** has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Science in Education with a concentration in Reading/Writing/Literacy. As a reading specialist, Ms. Fair-Davis' New Jersey Department of Education efforts are currently focused on continuous school improvement within the Abbott school districts. She is currently the acting manager of the Regional Program Improvement Center in Edison.

**Jay Doolan** is currently the director of the Office of Academic and Professional Standards at the New Jersey State Department of Education. He has extensive administrative experience in managing high profile programs in the areas of curriculum development, special programs and services, urban education, and bilingual and ESL education. Currently, he is responsible for overseeing the implementation of New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards in all of the state's public schools. This entails policy and planning, the development of administrative code, and the management of a sizable staff that provides technical assistance and training to the state's schools. It also involves collaboration with all of the state's educational organizations and agencies, as well as all of the content area groups. He also coordinates the development and implementation of professional standards for teachers and administrators. Prior to assuming his current position in 1997, Mr. Doolan was the director of the Office of Direct Services where he was responsible for the administration of New Jersey's School for the Deaf, eleven regional day schools, the New Jersey School of the Arts, the Office of Criminal History and other projects. Mr. Doolan was also a director in the department's Division of Urban Education, where he worked directly with the state's largest urban districts to facilitate reform and systemic change.

From 1988 to 1991, Mr. Doolan worked in the department's Division of Bilingual and Compensatory Education. He was the director of the Office of Bilingual Education, where he was responsible for the implementation of bilingual and ESL programs for the state's growing limited English proficient population. That position, his experience in second language learning and assessment, and his current role of implementing standards-based reform, provides him with the unique background and experience to contribute to the Reading First initiative. He is currently completing his doctorate in educational administration at Rutgers University.

**Joe Hatrak** is a manager in the Office of Academic and Professional Standards where he is responsible for overseeing the Core Curriculum Content Standards review and update. Mr. Hatrak has served in leadership roles including those in the military where he served in positions including training officer and commander of a finance battalion. He holds a B.A. and M.Ed. in Business Education from the College of New Jersey, and completed the doctoral coursework in vocational-technical administration at Rutgers University. He is certified as a business education teacher, a certified public manager, and a school business administrator.

**Diane Kubinski's** educational background includes Ed.D. and M.A. degrees in education from Columbia University, an M.S. degree in Guidance and Counseling and Tests & Measurement from Long Island University, and a B.B.A. degree from City College, Baruch School. Dr. Kubinski's educational leadership and expertise extend from pre-K through adult and higher education. Diane is a member of New Jersey Language Arts Leaders Association and was a member of the International Reading Association. Her background includes over 20 years in educational administration and teaching with over 15 years in reading, language arts literacy, test development, assessment, and evaluation. She served as the project director for the Workplace Literacy Partnerships Program and the reading specialist/coordinator for the NJDOE EWT and HSPT11 assessments. Currently, Diane is the project manager for the SRA11 and the HSPT11. Diane has a history of developing and providing reading assessment professional development to over 600 school districts in the areas of scoring rubrics, score interpretation, and reading literacy.

**Ann Lawrence** is the director of the Office of Early Literacy. Before joining the department, Ann served as a supervisor and administrator and developed and implemented research-based curriculum and instructional practices in the teaching of English/language arts, reading and writing. This led to improved student performance on measures such as locally administered norm-referenced tests, district-designed reading and writing assessment (grades 3 to 7), and high-stakes assessment including the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT), Early Warning Test (EWT) SAT, AP Literature and Language, and English Achievement Tests. She has provided teacher training, consulting services and workshops on topics such as evaluating writing, teaching students to write, standards-based reading and writing, content area reading and writing, and vocabulary development. Her overall focus has been on improving instruction, the design of curricula and the selection of materials for the teaching of reading (and literacy) and writing, as well as assistance in the design and content of professional staff development programs in language arts literacy and general topics relating to assessment.

**Eugenia E. Lawson** is currently the acting Director of the Office of Program Planning and Design, Abbott Division. In this capacity, she oversees the daily operations of program staff involved in implementing the Abbott regulations in nine of the 30 Abbott districts. Ms. Lawson has been employed with the New Jersey Department of Education for the past 11 years. She has

served in several capacities, including policy development, public information, grant writing and management, and providing technical assistance and training to school districts on a variety of initiatives. She obtained a BA, specializing in K-12 world languages education and a Masters Degree in Administration, Supervision, and Curriculum Development from Georgian Court College.

**Susanne Miskiewicz** is an education specialist for the New Jersey Department of Education at the office of the Bergen County Superintendent of Schools. She is listed in Who's Who in American Education. Having taught for many years she has held many leadership roles serving as Vice President of the Linden Board of Education and President of the New Providence Education Association. She presently serves as Treasurer for the Diversity 2000 Council at Kean University, State Leader for the National Council of Teachers of English and is on the Board of Directors for the Linden Free Public Library. She was the recipient of a full scholarship from Kean University and the Vladka Mead Foundation to study the Holocaust in Poland and Israel. Susanne holds a B.A. in Elementary Education and an M.A. from Kean University as a reading specialist, as well as additional certification in nursery school and as a principal/supervisor.

**Linda Morse** serves as the coordinator for comprehensive health, physical education, and gifted and talented programs in the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Academic and Professional Standards. Linda oversees the development and implementation of the standards and related assessments in health and physical education. In addition, she provides technical assistance to districts to develop gifted and talented programs and services and assists local districts to implement research-based identification processes and programs. Linda has experience in policy development, grants management, and research-based programs. She holds a registered nurse diploma from the Lankenau Hospital School of Nursing, an undergraduate degree in health education, and a graduate degree in curriculum and instruction, both from Rowan University. She is certified in elementary education, health education, school nursing, and supervision and is a nationally certified health education specialist (CHES). Before joining the department ten years ago as a teacher trainer in the regional training academies, Linda served as a healthcare manager, K-12 school health educator, and as a community health educator. Linda is a national Public Health Leadership Institute Fellow, has served on the American Association for Health Education's Ethics Committee, and was recently named president-elect of the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (SSDHPER).

**Timothy Peters** received a Ph.D. in English Literature from Boston University in 1991. He has taught English and Humanities at Boston University, the University of Connecticut, and Temple University. He joined the New Jersey Department of Education in May 2000, and is currently acting director in the Office of Evaluation and Assessment.

**Gail Robinson** is an early literacy coordinator for New Jersey's literacy initiative. She was a helping teacher in language arts in Montclair, New Jersey. Her experience includes many years as a reading teacher in a large K-2 school in Montclair. She has also worked as a Reading Recovery Teacher.

**Carla Spates** works for the Division of Student Services in the Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability in aligning state policy with federal policy, as well as providing statewide training and technical assistance to assure statewide compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. She has also served as a state liaison to Abbott districts. Her educational

background includes a minor in reading. She has taught in non-public and public schools in grades K, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, as well as in both undergraduate and graduate courses. Additionally, Ms. Spates has also served as a mentor and peer coach to alternate route teachers and novice teachers. Her professional background also includes developing, implementing, and assessing professional development workshops for a large school district.

**Richard C. Ten Eyck** has spent more than four decades in education. Before joining the New Jersey State Department of Education, he served as superintendent of schools in Little Egg Harbor, a position he held since 1993.

From 1983 to 1989, he served as assistant superintendent of schools for the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District. From 1986 to 1989, he was administrative assistant to the superintendent at the Wallkill Valley Regional High School. He taught German and social studies, and served as foreign languages supervisor at the High Point Regional High School from 1968 to 1986. He was a Fulbright Exchange teacher in Germany from 1967 to 1968. He began his career in education teaching at Saint Joseph's High School in Metuchen.

Richard Ten Eyck received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Assumption College and a Master of Arts in Education Administration from Lehigh University. He lives in Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey.

**JoAnne Tubman** is currently the Language Arts Literacy content specialist for the GEPA and the HSPA SRA. Ms. Tubman earned a B.A. degree in English from Howard University, a M.A. degree in Instruction and Curriculum from Kean University, and her Supervisor's certification from Rowan University. Ms. Tubman is a New Jersey certified English and English as a Second Language teacher. She has served as an assessor for English as a New Language certification for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and is an assessor for the Test of Spoken English. Ms. Tubman was an English and ESL teacher at Burlington City High School for fourteen years and was Chair of the English Department for two years at Burlington City High School before leaving the high school to work at the NJDOE's Office of Evaluation and Assessment.

**Jean Voorhees** is presently coordinating Department of Education efforts for the Reading First initiative and has attended both the Secretary of Education's Reading Academy and grant writing sessions sponsored by RMC. She is language arts literacy coordinator in the Office of Standards and Professional Development. She is formerly a K-12 district reading coordinator and a teacher of 23 years, and has received in-depth training as an early intervention teacher. She holds a Doctorate of Education in child and youth studies (birth to age 18), a Masters Degree in reading and communication sciences, and elementary education certification in K-8, with a specialization in early childhood. She works with school districts, higher education, and business/literacy partners in an effort to promote the State Core Curriculum Content Standards. She provides technical training on alignment to the standards to teachers, curriculum writers, and administrators around the state. Jean has worked with Rutgers University and coordinated efforts related to the GAINS project in helping parents and teachers better understand the state standards. She is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, IRA, NJRA, ASCD, NJPSA, the International Reading Association State Leaders Committee, the New Jersey Reading Association's Legislative Council, and NJ Reads initiative for Verizon.

**Dr. Timothy Shanahan**  
**National Consultant**

Chicago, Illinois; Professor of Urban Education, Director of the Center for Literacy, and Coordinator of Graduate Programs in Reading, Writing, and Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Internationally recognized reading researcher with extensive experience with children in Head Start, children with special needs, and children in inner-city schools. Editor of the Yearbook of the National Reading Conference and formerly Associate Editor of the Journal of Reading Behavior. Received the Albert J. Harris Award for Outstanding Research on Reading Disability and the Milton D. Jacobson Readability Research Award from the International Reading Association. Member, Board of Directors of the International Reading Association. Member, American Educational Research Association, National Council on Research in Language and Literacy, National Council of Teachers of English, National Reading Conference, and Society for the Study of Reading.

EDWARD J. DOOLAN  
41 Sunset Avenue  
Trenton, New Jersey 08628  
(609) 882-1283 (Home)  
(609) 984-5322 (Work)

**OBJECTIVE:**

An administrative position with a focus on standards-based reform, curriculum development, special programs and projects, whole school reform, and student performance.

**QUALIFIED BY:**

- Proven ability to manage the operations of the Department of Education's office of Academic and Career Standards (Division of Educational Programs and Assessment), Office of Standards and Professional Development (Office of Academic and Professional Standards), the Office of Direct Services, the Urban Assistance Center-North, the Bureau of Bilingual Education, and the Office of Education for Homeless Children and Youth;
- Knowledge and understanding of the changes and reforms needed to improve educational achievement in schools through experience and doctoral work, such as standards-based reform, whole school reform, and professional development for teachers and administrators;
- Extensive knowledge of the state's educational system due to varied background in administration both at the local district and Department of Education levels;
- Strong organizational skills in developing and implementing programs; and
- Excellent communication skills, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to lead by collaborating.

**Director, Office of Academic and Professional Standards**, Division of Educational Programs and Assessment (1997 to 2002)

- Direct the operation of: the Office of Academic and Professional Standards, the New Jersey School of the Arts; Library and Media Services; Eisenhower Professional Development Programs; Gifted and Talented Programs; and Gaining Achievement in the New Standards (GAINS) Projects in all content areas for parents and teachers.
- Responsible for: development, implementation, and revision of New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards; development of Curriculum Frameworks in all content areas; implementation of a professional development network in all content areas in collaboration with colleges and universities and content area organizations; implementation of professional development for teachers and administrators regulations; disseminating information about standards-based reform through written materials, speeches, and presentations; managing and supervising all units in the office including 33 staff members; and developing a strategic plan for accomplishing the office's major goals and objectives.



## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

**New Jersey State Department of Education**, Trenton, New Jersey (1976 to present)

**Acting Assistant Commissioner**, Division of Academic and Career Standards (June 2001 to February 2002)

Direct the operation of: Office of Standards and Professional Development; Office of Assessment; Office of Innovative Programs and Practices; Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives; Office of Licensing and Credentials.

Responsible for: revision of the Core Curriculum Content Standards; development and implementation of the statewide assessment system in grades 4, 8, and 11-12; identification, recognition, and showcasing of innovative programs and practices that are working in New Jersey's public schools; administration of the federal Carl Perkins Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the approval of private vocational schools; administration of the licensing of public school employees, preservice training programs for educators, and the alternate route to certification.

**Director, Office of Direct Services**, Division of Field Services (1994 to 1997)

- Directed the operation of six diverse units: the Katzenbach School for the Deaf; 11 Regional Day Schools for the severely handicapped; the New Jersey School of the Arts; the Office of Recognition/Scholarships; the Office of Nonpublic Schools; and the Office of Criminal History.
- Developed and implemented policies and procedures that impacted on services to students and teachers; developed strategic plans for all units; prepared and monitored budgets and contracts; coordinated facilities and construction projects for the Katzenbach School and the regional day schools; aligned unit goals with the department's strategic plan for systemic change; and supervised 16 professionals and three support staff members.

**Acting Director, Urban Assistance Center-North**, Division of Field Services (1992 to 1994)

- Supervised eleven staff members in a field office designed to support and facilitate school change in urban districts; planned, reviewed and approved all correspondence, reports, and materials prepared by staff; assessed staff performance; and reviewed administrative and service delivery systems to ensure that the division's mission and district's needs were met.
- Coordinated the development, review, approval, evaluation, and verification of district Educational Improvement Plans (EIPs) in 13 special needs districts; conducted workshops and presentations about the urban education initiative; and communicated on a regular basis with the assistant commissioner, county office superintendents and other department staff regarding the special needs districts.

- Assisted in developing and implementing the strategic plan for the division's urban education unit and in writing **Improving Student Outcomes: Guidelines for Developing, Implementing, Verifying, and Evaluating Educational Improvement Plans.**

**Assistant Director, UAC-N (1991-1992)**

**Manager, Office of Bilingual Education and Office of Education for Homeless Children and Youth, Division of Bilingual and Compensatory Education (1988-1991)**

- Managed the overall operation of two state offices that focused on technical assistance to and monitoring of public school districts, as mandated by the N.J. Bilingual Education Act, Title VII legislation, the Transition Program for Refugee Children, the Emergency Immigrant Education Program, and the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.
- Opened the Office of Education for Homeless Children and Youth in response to the federal Homeless Assistance Act. Created the mission of the unit, co-authored the state's plan for educating homeless students, and drafted legislation (enacted in 1990) to ensure that homeless students have access to appropriate educational opportunities.

**Planning Associate I (1987-1988), Education Specialist 11 (1980-1987), ESL Consultant (1976-1980), Office of Bilingual Education, Division of Bilingual and Compensatory Education**

**Consultant (1981), International School Services, Yanbu Industrial Complex, Saudi Arabia**

**Administrative Assistant, Federal Programs (1974-1976), Guidance Counselor (1973-1974), ESL Teacher (1971-1973), Camden Board of Education, Camden, New Jersey**

**Peace Corps Volunteer Service:** College ESL Teacher and Teacher Trainer in Ghana, Africa (1970-71) and High School ESL Teacher in Konya, Turkey (1969-1970).

## **EDUCATION:**

1996-Present	Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey Doctoral Program in Education Administration and Supervision
1980-1988	Rider College, Trenton, New Jersey Supervisor's Certificate ESL Certificate
1972-1974	Trenton State College, Trenton, New Jersey M.Ed. in Counseling and Psychology Student Personnel Services Certificate
1969	Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut BA. in English

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

- Phi Delta Kappa
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- International Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages National Association of Bilingual Educators
- New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and Bilingual Educators (Member of the Executive Board, 1980-1984)
- National Association for State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (Founding Member)
- New Jersey Personnel and Guidance Association
- Citizens Committee for Children in New Jersey
- Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of New Jersey
- Metropolitan Opera Guild

## **Dr. P. Jean Voorhees**

1998- Present      ***State Language Arts Literacy Coordinator***, Academic and Professional Standards, Division of Educational Programs and Assessments, New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey

- Coordinate state level language arts activities related to the state Core Curriculum Content Standards (K-12);
- Coordinate statewide committees to develop and revise state language arts literacy standards for State Board adoption (2001-02);
- Coordinate Reading First activities for grant proposal and interdepartmental team;
- Provide leadership for state and national organizations related to language arts/literacy;
- Coordinate professional development for reading and language arts activities as they relate to state Core Curriculum Content Standards;
- Manage efforts for Gaining Achievement in the New Standards (GAINS) with Rutgers University (three-year project);
- Deliver high quality presentations and workshops on standards-based reform efforts at state, national, and regional events.

1995-1998      ***District Reading Coordinator*** K-12, Old Bridge Township Schools, NJ (14 schools; 11 elementary, 2 middle schools, 1 high school)

- Coordinated professional development activities for district in-service programs;
- Worked with outside consultants, knowledgeable in scientifically based reading research, to coordinate intensive early reading training in K-2 to basic skills teachers and eventually other teachers in the primary grades;
- Chaired and supervised elementary committees in aligning district reading program with the state Core Curriculum Content Standards for language arts literacy;
- Developed five-year long-range professional development plan adopted by Board;
- Served on School Board Committee to establish district vision, mission, and goals;
- Coached elementary teachers in 11 elementary schools;
- Provided demonstration lessons to elementary teachers on balanced literacy, assessment strategies, grouping, differentiated instruction, and best practices;
- Chaired District Reading Committee that included teacher representatives from all 14 schools;
- Chaired SAT Committee for high school;

1972- 1995      ***Elementary Teacher/ Staff Developer, Old Bridge Schools, New Jersey***

- Kindergarten Teacher
- First Grade Support Teacher (early interventions/scientific-based reading programs)
- Reading Teacher (grades K-8)
- Language Arts Teacher (grades K-8)
- Reading Coach (K-4): implementation of newly adopted elementary literature program; selected to provide high quality professional development to over 200 teachers and administrators over three years, including mentoring, coaching, and demonstrations.
- Gifted and Talented Teacher
- After-school programs and book club coordinator; K-5 summer reading production

## Education

- Ed.D.** Child and Youth Studies, Nova Southeastern University, FL (1994)
- M.A.** Communication Science/ Reading, Kean University, NJ (1986)
- B.S.** Elementary Education, Early Childhood, Minor, Concord College, WV (1972)

## Certifications

- Elementary Education, State of New Jersey
- Preschool, Nursery, State of New Jersey
- Reading Specialist, State of New Jersey
- Principal Eligibility, State of New Jersey
- Supervisor, State of New Jersey
- Administrator Eligibility, State of New Jersey

## Special Recognition and Honors

- Governor's Teacher of the Year Recognition Award (1991)
- Who's Who in America (1994)
- Member, Phi Delta Kappa Fraternity (1994- present)
- Member, International Reading Association State Leaders Committee (2001-2002)

## Recent Training/Experiences Related to Scientific Based Research

- Selected to participate in Secretary of Education Rod Paige's Reading Academy, Washington DC (February 2002)
- Participated in Grant Writing for Reading First Institute, Washington DC (April 2002)
- Participated in former Reading Excellence Act (REA) Institutes hosted by the United States Department of Education, including scientific-based reading research workshops (1999-2001)
- Coordinated Department of Education efforts for REA and Reading First grant proposals (1999-2002)
- Participated on the New Jersey State Team for the National Reading Summit, Washington DC (1998)
- Participated on an expert reading panel to develop test items for a proposed National Fourth Grade Test (Spring 2000), Washington DC
- Coordinated Department efforts with Rutgers University, Graduate School of Education, to develop a statewide parent initiative called Gaining Achievement in the New Standards (GAINS) for language arts literacy, based on best instructional practices and scientific research; principal investigators included: Lesley Morrow, Michael Smith, Diane Tracey (1999-2002)
- Managed statewide literacy committee of over 40 educators in revising the State Language Arts Literacy Standards; including a comprehensive review of the literature, analyzing national standards and state exemplars, and establishing grade-level benchmarks for K-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12 derived from scientific research (2001-2002)

Shannon E. Riley-Ayers  
121 Philhower Avenue  
Califon, NJ 07830  
(908) 832-7580

- EDUCATION:** **The Pennsylvania State University**, State College, PA  
Doctor of Philosophy, Educational Psychology, 2002  
*Completed an intense research-based doctoral program with an emphasis on early literacy education.*  
Master of Education, Language and Literacy Education, 1999  
Master of Science, Educational Psychology, 1998
- PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:** **Governor McGreevey's Early Literacy Task Force**  
New Jersey Department of Education, 2002  
*Worked closely with Dorothy Strickland and Bob Copeland, Co-Chairs, to develop a document representing best practices and recommendations to guide efforts to improve the quality of early literacy education in the State of New Jersey.*
- New Jersey State Department of Education**  
Coordinator, Office of Early Literacy, June 2002-Present  
Utilize current research and theory to develop training curriculum for reading coaches and low performing schools.
- The College of New Jersey**  
Assistant Professor, Spring Semester 2002  
Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education  
Instructed undergraduate and graduate students in child development and research-based best practices of education.
- Bernards Township Board of Education**  
Reading Specialist, Fall 1999-Winter 2001  
Staff Development Instructor, Fall 2000-Spring 2001  
Assisted struggling students in the area of language arts literacy and consulted with and supported teachers in implementing research-based practices of literacy education.
- Brookdale Community College**  
Instructor, Fall 1999  
Reading Department  
Instructed students in reading strategies to strengthen their skills.
- Pennsylvania State University**  
Research Assistant & Teaching Assistant, Fall 1996-Spring 1999

Participated in educational research and assisted professors.

**Brick Township Board of Education**

Kindergarten Teacher, Fall 1994-Spring 1996

*Facilitated learning for two large half-day kindergarten sessions.*

Shannon E. Riley-Ayers

HONORS:

Teachers as Readers Grant from the Central New Jersey Council  
of the International Reading Association, 2000

Pi Lambda Theta Honors Society, 1999

Alumni Society Graduate Research Initiation Grant, 1998

James Naddeo Scholarship for an Outstanding Education Student, 1998

***Ann M. Lawrence***

709 Country Club Road  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
(908) 685-1263

Director of the Office of Early Literacy Division of Educational Programs and  
Assessment / New Jersey Department of Education

Previous Experiences:

LLTeach, Inc., Co-Owner/ Consultant / Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
(Teacher training, curriculum services, etc. Projects included workshops/  
training related to teaching of reading and writing, grades K-12, content and  
instruction on NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards, the New Jersey State  
Tests [grades 4, 8 & 11], the SAT [verbal], item writing and consulting for major  
test companies, etc. It is registered [#75] with the NJ State Dept. of Education to  
provide Staff Development training programs.)

Superintendent of Schools Saddle Brook, New Jersey  
Director of Basic Skills, Testing & Special Programs, Edison Twp. Public  
Schools, NJ  
Supervisor of English, Edison Twp. Public Schools, NJ  
Supervisor of Language Arts/ Teacher of English High Point Reg. HS Dist.,  
Sussex, NJ  
Teacher of English and Social Studies Berthoud, CO  
Teacher of English and Social Studies Corpus Christi, TX

Education:

Montclair State College, NJ MA English (& addl. work for certification as a  
Supervisor, school principal and chief school administrator in NJ)  
Abilene Christian College, TX BSEd English Education  
(Additional graduate work at Rutgers University and elsewhere)

Publications:

*Good Connections for Testing*. Paul R & Ann M. Lawrence. Bridgewater:  
LLTeach, Inc. ©2000.  
"The Superintendent Takes the SAT" *Education Week*, 1997  
Book Reviews in the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, International  
Reading Association

Presentations:

Workshops, seminars and conferences throughout NJ and elsewhere . Topics include  
"Writing as Process," integrated language arts, various assessment topics -- including improving  
student performance (on norm-referenced, criterion referenced and performance based  
assessments)



PRESENTATIONS/ PUBLICATIONS:	<p>Riley, S. E. (1999). <i>Development of an instrument to measure first grade students' motivation to write</i>. Presented at the Easter Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Hilton Head, South Carolina</p> <p>Van Meter, P. &amp; Riley, S. E. (1998). <i>Writing and Drawing: What is gained with different representational formats?</i> Presented at the National Reading Conference, Austin, Texas.</p> <p>Van Meter, P. &amp; Riley, S. E. (1999). <i>Writing and Drawing: What is gained with different representational formats?</i> National Reading Conference Yearbook, 48, 146-156.</p>
SERVICE COMMITTEES:	<p>Governor McGreevey's Early Literacy Task Force, 2002</p> <p>Language Arts Curriculum Writing Team, Bernards Township, NJ</p> <p>Language Arts Evaluation Steering Committee, Bernards Township, NJ</p> <p>Teacher-Pupil Assistance Committee, Bernards Township, NJ</p> <p>Representative for Bernards Township to the Central NJ Council of the International Reading Association</p> <p>Young Authors' Conference Committee, Central NJ Council of the IRA</p>
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES:	<p>New Jersey Reading Specialist Certificate</p> <p>New Jersey Teaching Certificate in Elementary Education</p>
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:	<p>International Reading Association</p> <p>Central New Jersey Council of the International Reading Association</p> <p>National Association for the Education of Young Children</p> <p>Easter Educational Research Association, Regional Representative</p> <p>New Jersey Language Arts Leaders Association</p>

Gail L. Robinson  
9 High Terrace

Montclair, NJ 07042

(973) 783-1149

EDUCATION: **Rutgers The State University**, New Brunswick, NJ

*A. Education/English*

PROFESSIONAL  
EXPERIENCE:

**The Montclair Public Schools**

**Teacher on Special Assignment, Fall 1998-Spring 2002**

*Provided ongoing support and coordination of language arts literacy curriculum implementation for 185 language arts teachers, reading teachers and special education teachers in kindergarten through eighth grade. Responsibilities included modeling lessons, mentoring, conducting articulation meetings and furnishing resources to assist teachers in meeting state standards and district goals.*

*Conceptualized and collaborated with 63 language arts teachers to create a district wide Core Writing Portfolio Project to support and improve the writing of students in grades 3-5.*

Developed program format, designed curriculum, selected staff/resources, trained staff and parents, administered and evaluated the Title I: Services To Academically At Risk Students (S.T.A.R.S.) summer school for first through fifth grades.

Chaired a committee of teachers and administrators in the design and development of a comprehensive K-8 language arts curriculum for the purposes of consistent curriculum delivery district wide.

*Reading Recover Teacher 1994-1996*

Implemented Reading Recovery reading intervention program to improve the reading and writing skills of struggling first graders.

*Elementary Teacher 1987-1994*

Taught kindergarten through second grades.

PRESENTATIONS:

*Developed and presented professional development workshops entitled: Building Literate Classrooms, ESPA Roadshow and ESPA Roadshow Encore: Instructional Practices that Prepare Students for the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment K-4*

*,Interpreting New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in Language Arts, Writing Across the Curriculum, GEPA Strategies for Everyday Use, New Teacher Seminar Series: Effective Classroom Management, Brain-based Teaching and Learning, and Different Brains, Different Learners.*

*Developed and presented family and community workshops entitled: The Love and Joy of Reading, How to Help Your Child Achieve Academic Success on the ESPA, GEPA, and Beyond, GEPA: Choices for Success Community Tutorial, Critical Reading and Thinking Strategies, Understanding the New Jersey Language Arts Literacy Standards.*

SERVICE  
COMMITTEES:

Governor McGreevey's Early Literacy Task Force, State of New Jersey  
Montclair Public Schools/Parents/Community Leadership Team, Montclair, NJ  
Math Advisory Committee, Montclair, NJ  
Sister to Sister Teen Mentoring Program, YWCA, Children's Literacy Campaign, Montclair, NJ  
*Montclair Art Museum's EdLink: Visual Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills Program, Montclair, NJ*  
*Child Development Center Advisory Board, Montclair, Newark and Orange, NJ*

PROFESSIONAL  
CERTIFICATES:

*New Jersey Certificate in Elementary Education*  
*Reading Recovery Teacher Certificate*

PROFESSIONAL  
ORGANIZATIONS:

*International Reading Association*  
*New Jersey Council of International Reading Association*  
*National Council of Teachers of English*  
*Montclair Education Association*